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NIGERIA



NEWSLETTER

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Buhari Receives UNGA President, Seeks UN's Help on Lake Chad, North-East



President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria (Right) welcomes the Presidential Villa Abuja, the President of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Ms Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces, on 7 May 2019.

President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria, on 7 May 2019, solicited the assistance of United Nations and the international community in addressing the security and humanitarian challenges in the North-East as well as the drying up of Lake Chad.

President Buhari made the call while receiving the visiting President of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, H.E. Ms Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja. He noted that the condition of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country was pathetic, with at least a million children who neither know their parents nor where they come from, a condition imposed on them by the Boko Haram insurgents.

President Buhari explained further that "The damage to infrastructure, particularly in the North East, had been horrendous. Bridges have been blown up, schools, hospitals, churches, mosques, and other buildings have been destroyed. All these will be rehabilitated, and every form of international help is welcome."

On the recharge of Lake Chad through inter-basin water transfer from Congo River, President Buhari said climate change was real to the region, noting that no fewer than 30 million people were negatively affected by the shrinking lake, with at least half of them being Nigerians. He stressed that the recharging the lake was beyond the financial power of the affected countries....Continue on page 2.

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UN Appoints Emir of Kano, 16 Others as SDGs Advocates



The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has named His Highness Muhammadu Sanusi II Emir of Kano, amongst the 17 influential public figures appointed to raise awareness, inspire greater ambition, and push for faster action on the SDGs, which were adopted by world leaders on 25 September 2015.

To build the momentum for transformative, inclusive development by 2030, the Secretary-General's SDG Advocates, co-chaired by Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Norway and President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo of Ghana, will use their unique...Continue on page 2.

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The UNGA president commended Nigeria for being a key part of the United Nations system, saying the country was well respected in the global body.

"Nigeria is a major troops' contributor to peace keeping operations and a major part of the human rights architecture," Garces said.

She lauded Buhari's leadership of ECOWAS and the Lake Chad Basin Commission, and pledged to call the attention of the international community to the "hurting effects" of the Lake Chad problem, and other issues raised by the Nigerian leader. Garces also lauded Nigeria for rehabilitating the UN building in Abuja, which was destroyed by Boko Haram insurgents during an attack in August, 2011.

The UNGA President was received by the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the United Nations Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon and officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Presidential Wing of Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja.

Ms Garces met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Geoffrey Onyeama; Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Ms Aisha Abubakar; and engaged with women groups and a large youth audience at the University of Abuja.



Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the United Nations Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon (Left) exchanges pleasantries with the President of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Ms Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces, as she arrives the Presidential Wing of Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, on 6 May 2019.

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The United Nations Secretary-General's 2019 SDG Advocates

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo	Prime Minister Erna Solberg	His Highness the Emir of Kano	Her Majesty Queen Mathilde	Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser	Richard Curtis	Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim
Jack Ma	Graça Machel	Dia Mirza	Alaa Murabit	Nadia Murad Basee Taha	Edward Ndopu	Paul Polman
www.unsgdadvocates.org		Jeffrey Sachs	Marta Vieira da Silva	Forest Whitaker	#SDGAdvocates	

... platforms and leadership to inspire cross-cutting mobilization of the global community.

"We have the tools to answer the questions posed by climate change, environmental pressure, poverty and inequality. They lie in the great agreements of 2015 – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change. But tools are no use if you don't use them. So, today, and every day, my appeal is clear and simple. We need action, ambition and political will. More action, more ambition and more political will," said the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General has tasked the Advocates with driving that action, building that ambition, and solidifying global political

will. The Advocates represent the universal character of the SDGs. They will leverage and build bridges between their unique audiences, and work together to drive progress.

"By joining forces to achieve our goals, we can turn hope into reality – leaving no one behind," said Co-Chair of the SDG Advocates group Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Norway.

Said Co-Chair of the SDG Advocates and President of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, "This is a time of great hope for the world. If we work smartly together and stay on course, we can raise millions out of poverty and significantly expand basic social services for many more by the 2030 end date of the SDGs."

UN Deputy Secretary General tasks African Women on Peace Building



AWLN Steering Committee members with the UN Women Country Representative. From left, Inimfon Etuk, Prof. Funmi Para-Mallam, Sen. Biodun Olujimi, Fatima Askira, H.E Mrs. Toyin Saraki, Amb. Toyo Nkoyo, Comfort Lamptey (Country Rep. UN Women), Chief Mrs. Gloria Shoda, Mrs. Janet, Pst. Esther Ibang.

Ms Amina Mohammed, the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General charged Nigerian women to ensure active contribution in the peacebuilding process, transformation and stability of Nigeria. Ms. Mohammed made the call in Abuja via a video message during the inauguration of the steering committee of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN), Nigeria Chapter, on 2 May 2019 at Transcorp Hilton hotel, Abuja Nigeria.

“Meaningful women’s participation has proven crucial to the success of peace and security interventions, efforts to reduce poverty and accelerate development and to work to make sure decision making in all sectors are responsive”. She urged the steering committee members of AWLN to drive the implementation of both the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development and Africa’s Agenda for 2063.

The UN Women Country Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Comfort Lamptey laid emphasis on AWLN’s encompassing nature. That AWLN is not meant to replace other existing women networks but to harness their support to achieve their set objectives. Highlighting that the platform must involve an intergenerational angle drawing woman from all works of life, who are passionate about leadership.

Also speaking was Dr Tunji Asaolu, Country Representative, African Union, who keyed in that the AU recognises women to be

very special beings as the essence of development revolves around women. Asaolu urged members of AWLN to ensure that the relevant instruments were being promoted in other to enable women enjoy their full rights.

Hajiya Aisha Abubakar, Minister of Women and Social Affairs, lauded the initiative and pledged the support and partnership of the Ministry with AWLN programmes capable of fostering development. She called for the inclusion of women in the grassroots and those physically challenged, urging the new committee to be focused on the mandate of the network.

The newly elected Chairperson of AWLN, Amb. Nkoyo Toyo said that the steering committee members are aware of the numerous challenges facing women in Nigeria and globally. “We are very much committed and fired up to see that the narrative around women’s equal participation in leadership changes”.

AWLN was birthed in 2017, as a continental network of women leaders and activists from Africa committed to advancing a common vision for women’s empowerment and leadership in the development of the continent. AWLN seeks to galvanize the leadership of African women towards fostering lasting peace and sustainable development in all sectors and at all levels, building on, and working with, existing women networks. UN Women, the African Union and the Government of Germany have worked collaboratively to midwife the regional and national AWLN networks.

UN, Gov’t of Norway Launch 2-Year Programme on Women, Peace & Security

Through its just-concluded program on, Promoting Women’s Engagement in Peace and Security in Northern Nigeria (2014-2018), UN Women has supported the Federal Government of Nigeria, three Northern States (Adamawa, Plateau and Gombe) and selected constituent local government areas (LGAs) to strengthen women’s leadership, advance gender equality and improve protection for women and children in conflict settings, by ensuring the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325).

The Government of Norway in partnership with UN Women launched the 2nd Phase of the Women, Peace and Security Programme in Bauchi and Benue States on 29 April 2019 and 2nd of May 2019 respectively. Both events had in attendance about 100 stakeholders drawn from different sectors, including Government MDAs, CSOs, Security Agencies, Traditional and Religious institutions and the Media, among others.

The Norwegian Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr Jens-Petter Kjemprud who was speaking at the official launch of women, peace and security program in Bauchi State, said that Nigeria especially the North Eastern states have over the years been ravaged by conflicts which affected women and their children. He advocated for the participation of women in peace and security processes in Nigeria just as he added that there is the need for state governments including that of Bauchi to implement the National Action Plan on women so that they will participate effectively in bringing enduring peace in the society. “Women and children in Boko Haram captivity have been with trauma as they

return to their communities. Here, the roles of religious and traditional leaders are very important. We know that women have been side-lined in the process of peace-making for too long”. The Ambassador further noted that the program was initiated by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the empowerment of Women, adding that government of Norway is sponsoring the project in Nigeria in collaboration with the Federal Government.

Also speaking at the WPS programme Launch in Bauchi State, was the Country Representative of UN Women, Comfort Lamptey who added that the program would work on three issues to achieve the objective which includes advocacy for the formulation of policies that are responsive to women’s security, building women’s capacity on conflict mediation and resolution and changing societal perception on the womenfolk.

Deputy Country Representative of UN Women, Mr. Lansana Wonneh, reminded the audience at the launch in Benue State that women are mostly affected in situations of conflict and will do better in peace building process if they are actively involved. In his words, “Gender Equality and Women empowerment are gender right issues, they are the basis for development at the local, family and the national levels”.

Also speaking, Programme specialist, UN Women Mr. Peter Mancha, said the objective of the programme in Nigeria was to ensure that women participate effectively in peace and security process, peace negotiations, conflict prevention and resolution as well as improve public perception of the role of women in peace and security.

Nearly 900 Children Released from Armed Group in North-East Nigeria

New release brings total number of children released since 2017 to over 1,700



UNICEF Nigeria/2016/Abubakar

A total of 894 children, including 106 girls, have been released from the ranks of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Maiduguri, north-east Nigeria in May 2019, as part of its commitment to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children.

The CJTF is a local militia that helps the Nigerian security forces in the fight against insurgency in north-east Nigeria. It was formed in 2013, with the aim of protecting communities from attack.

“Any commitment for children that is matched with action is a step in the right direction for the protection of children’s rights and must be recognised and encouraged,” said Mohamed Fall, Representative of UNICEF in Nigeria and the Co-chair of United Nations Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting on Grave Child Rights Violations (CTFMR).

“Children of north-east Nigeria have borne the brunt of this conflict. They have been used by armed groups in combatant and non-combatant roles and witnessed death, killing and violence.

This participation in the conflict has had serious implications for their physical and emotional well-being.”

Since September 2017, when the CJTF signed an action plan committing to put measures in place to end and prevent recruitment and use of children, 1,727 children and young people have been released. Since then, there has been no new recruitment of children by the CJTF.

The children and young people released will benefit from reintegration programmes to help them return to civilian life, seize new opportunities for their own development, and contribute to bringing lasting peace in Nigeria, as productive citizens of their country. Without this support, many of the children released from armed groups struggle to fit into civilian life, as most are not educated and have no vocational skills.

In the ongoing armed conflict in north-east Nigeria, more than 3,500 children were recruited and used by non-state armed groups between 2013 and 2017. Others have been abducted, maimed, raped and killed.

“We cannot give up the fight for the children, as long as children are still affected by the fighting. We will continue until there is no child left in the ranks of all armed groups in Nigeria,” said Fall.

UNICEF continues to work closely with state authorities and partners to support the implementation of reintegration programmes for all children released from armed groups, as well as others affected by the ongoing conflict. The gender and age-appropriate community-based reintegration support interventions include an initial assessment of their well-being, psychosocial support, education, vocational training, informal apprenticeships, and opportunities to improve livelihoods.

At least 9,800 people formerly associated with armed groups, as well as vulnerable children in communities, have accessed such services between 2017 and 2018.

UN Launches Campaign ‘For every child, every right’ on Nigerian Children’s Day

On May 27, UNICEF commemorated Nigerian Children’s Day, saying that it comes at a crucial moment for child rights in the country, and for child rights globally. They launched a campaign to draw awareness to children’s rights by all of Nigerian society.

“While there have been many advances over the last years, children in Nigeria are still not accessing health, nutrition, education and other rights to the extent that they must,” said Peter Hawkins, UNICEF’s new Country Representative in Nigeria, who took up his post today. “Sadly, it is the most disadvantaged children who are suffering the greatest challenge in having their rights fulfilled.”

Nigerian Children’s Day 2019 falls during the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which is being commemorated this year around the world.

As part of the celebrations, UNICEF launched a “Passport to Your Rights” – a copy of the CRC in child-friendly language, in pocket format. UNICEF aims that every child in Nigeria has a copy by 2030 – the deadline for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The CRC ‘passport’ is also available in Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and Pidgin languages, helping to ensure access by millions of Nigerians.

“Thirty years ago, something incredible happened. World leaders came together in a moment of unity for the world’s children. They made a promise to every child to protect and fulfil their rights, by adopting the UN’s Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention established childhood as a period that is separate from adulthood - a time in which children should grow, learn, play, develop and flourish,” said Peter Hawkins.

“We want to see every Nigerian child have that kind of a childhood,” said Peter Hawkins.

The Convention went on to become the most widely-ratified human rights treaty in history, with Nigeria ratifying it in 1991. It has helped to transform children’s lives; inspiring legislative changes to protect children and enabling them to participate actively in their societies.

“Today, more children than ever live healthy lives, are learning in school and have a voice in their communities. But much more needs to be done as children’s rights continue to be unfulfilled and threatened daily around the world and in Nigeria. There are still too many children being left behind, and too many childhoods cut short by violence, conflict, poverty and inequality,” said Peter Hawkins.

“On this Nigerian Children’s Day, we must look ahead to the future of childhood in this country, and re-commit to urgent, specific actions to protect the rights of every child - now, and in future generations.”

“Child rights will only be fully realized when every government and every citizen is aware of and upholds children’s rights, and every child can claim those rights. It is for this reason that we are launching a campaign ‘For every child, every right’ and will work closely with the government to ensure that all Nigerians are aware of the rights that all children have. This includes in particular children themselves.”

“Working together, we can seize this moment and make it a turning point for every child; I look forward to picking up this challenge, as the new UNICEF Country Representative in Nigeria,” said Peter Hawkins. To download a PDF copy of the CRC “Passport to your Rights,” please click [here](#)

Nigeria's Business Leaders join UN to visit Borno State in Support of Conflict-Affected People in the North-East



(From left to right). Mr. Adewale Tinubu (CEO of Oando PLC), Mr. Herbert Wigwe (MD of Access Bank), Mr. Edward Kallon (UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria) and Miss. Edem Wosornu (Head of Office, OCHA Nigeria) being briefed on the humanitarian situation upon arrival the Teachers Village IDP Camp in Maiduguri, Borno state.

Some of Nigeria's most influential and powerful business leaders travelled to Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, on 14 May 2019 in a first-ever collective visit to camps for internally displaced people where the UN and its humanitarian partners have been responding to the most urgent needs of women, men, and children displaced by the ongoing conflict across Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states in north-east Nigeria.

Mr. Adewale Tinubu, Group CEO of Oando Plc, one of Nigeria's largest indigenous energy companies, led a delegation that included Access Bank's Group Managing Director Mr. Herbert Wigwe, and former chairman of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) Mr. Kyari Bukar, among other private sector leaders. They joined the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mr. Edward Kallon, and other UN representatives on a visit to two IDP camps in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, where they met people whose lives have been uprooted by the ongoing crisis.

"The humanitarian community has been working tirelessly to provide shelter, food, health care and other basic needs to families who have been left with little or nothing. To see CEOs of banks and energy companies show compassion for the mothers and fathers, daughters and sons affected by this crisis brings a new beacon of hope for people who have endured too much. Together with the leading business minds in Nigeria, there is so much more we can do for Nigeria's most vulnerable people," said Edward Kallon, United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Nigeria.

The visit was part of the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund-Private Sector Initiative (NHF-PSI), a groundbreaking global initiative created in Nigeria that will see companies join donor countries in pooling donations and resources together. The platform aims to create a more collaborative and effective response to the ongoing humanitarian crisis that has affected over 7 million people in Nigeria's north-east, 80 percent of whom are women and children.

"This initiative is about Nigerians helping Nigerians. Today I have witnessed some of the most vulnerable people; women and children in the most dire circumstances. Having seen the magnitude of their humanitarian needs, it is obvious that it is not a task that the Government or any one agency can take on alone," said Mr. Adewale Tinubu. "The onus is on us to use our position to repair, nurture, build and sustain our society and pave a path for a truly inclusive economy," Mr. Tinubu added.

The delegation also met with the Executive Governor of Borno State, Alh. Kashim Shettima who welcomed this unique partnership.

"I am very glad that the Nigerian private sector, a very vibrant sector, is at the vanguard of driving this program. In the UN, Nigeria's private sector has found a partner that has the integrity to truly make things work", Governor Shettima stated.

Fourteen of the biggest companies in Nigeria signed up to the initiative launched in Lagos in November 2018, which will harness their financial resources, innovative capacity and entrepreneurial drive in support of the humanitarian response in the affected states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. The NHF-PSI offers a measurable and accountable platform for companies to pool their resources together to more effectively transform the lives of millions of their fellow Nigerians.

To date, the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund has raised \$83 million in contributions and pledges, thanks to the generous support of seventeen donor countries. Nigeria boasts one of Africa's largest economies with an emerging and thriving private sector globally.

The United Nations and founding private sector members of the initiative are urging more businesses to come together and collaborate under the platform of the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund-Private Sector Initiative.

The Price of Safety in Nigeria's Deadly Conflict

After fleeing an upsurge in violence in December, thousands of people eke out a living in Monguno, Northeast Nigeria

For three weeks, home for Zarah Modu has been a cavernous tent that serves as a reception centre for internally displaced people (IDPs) arriving in the town of Monguno. There is no privacy here. Men, women and children sleep together in the same space, something totally alien to the culture of this region. Zarah's two sons, four and three, lie sprawled across her, fast asleep in the stifling heat. They are among the latest victims of the long-running conflict in Nigeria's northeast, which has driven close to 2 million people from their homes over the past decade. When fighting escalated around Kukawa in November 2018, Zarah heard that thousands of people were fleeing. She thought she was safe in her village just outside the town.

"Fighters came one day. They told us to leave and started to burn our homes. We just ran. I got separated from my husband. I still don't know what has happened to him," says Zarah, who was nine months pregnant at the time.

Monguno was the closest town along the way. After a day of walking through the bush, she could go no further. She had to beg food for her boys. Luckily, she managed to get a lift in a pickup from some men who were collecting firewood.

Reaching Monguno after two days of travel, Zarah was exhausted. The town was full of new arrivals. Some were camped by the roadside while others had merged into camps dotted around the town. Over 80 per cent of those arriving were women and children.

Zarah spent a night on the roadside at a military checkpoint where people were being screened before being allowed into the town. That night, she went into labour. In state of distress, she was noticed by some passing UN aid workers who took her to a local clinic. Thirty-six hours later she gave birth to a baby boy. Tragically, her newborn son died within hours from complications resulting from the stress of Zarah's ordeal. Now she is recovering her strength at the reception centre.

Between November and February 2019, the population in Monguno's 12 IDP camps swelled by over 18,000. Most were new arrivals from Kukawa, Baga and surrounding areas. "At the peak of the crisis in December, we had over 500 people arriving here each day. The place was overflowing," explains Abdulaziz Shariff, from INTERSOS, the non-governmental organization which manages the reception centre. "People left their homes in a hurry. Most travelled on foot carrying very few possessions. I didn't see anyone arrive here with food," he says.

Now, daily arrivals fluctuate between 25 and 40. Most have been relocated to the camps dotted around the periphery of the town, which also house long-term IDPs who arrived from other areas of Borno State up to five years ago.

The only possession Zarah had when she arrived was a five-litre plastic jerrycan for carrying water. The other women in the shelter share their cooking pot, so she can prepare the food rations given to her by the UN World Food Programme (WFP), which stepped in to provide emergency rations to the new arrivals.

Since 2016, WFP has been working in Monguno with local partners, providing a lifeline to 40,000 people. The assistance comes in the form of vouchers that can be exchanged with local traders for a monthly ration of basic food items. Now the caseload exceeds 50,000.

"The markets are functioning well in Monguno, so vouchers are an effective way to support the local economy while also giving people choice in the food they buy," explains Myrta Kaulard, Country Director with WFP.

WFP has also expanded its nutrition programme and is providing fortified cereal to almost 33,000 pregnant and nursing women and young children, who are at risk of malnourishment.



Rukayya Abatcha is the sole provider for her young family. Photo: WFP/Patrick Fuller

Zarah was only meant to remain in the reception centre for 72 hours, but it's likely she will be here longer due to overcrowding in the camps. Many families have been here for months, but finding available land to build more shelters is challenging.

Providing adequate infrastructure in the camps is also a challenge. Water here is a highly valued commodity due to its scarcity. The few boreholes that exist in the camps struggle to produce enough for the growing numbers of residents.

Barely 100 metres from the reception centre, 54-year-old Osman Haske and his family are camped out in the shell of an abandoned house. With no roof, the family is exposed to the elements. Osman arrived in Monguno with 40 other families when fighting flared up in his hometown of Baga. He says he was never aware that he needed to register at the reception centre, which is the first step towards receiving humanitarian assistance.

"We found this place when we first arrived. It was being used as a toilet by local people and it took us four days to clean it out. Since then we've been surviving day-by-day. My main worry is how we will manage here when the rains come in a few weeks."

Osman's family is comparatively lucky. Outside, are scattered a handful of flimsy shelters which offer scant shade to the huddle of women and children trying to hide from the searing midday sun. Toma Mohammed and her neighbour Amina Umaru live here.

The vicious conflict playing out in Borno has left both of them deeply scarred. 65-year-old Amina saw her husband shot and killed when fighters attacked Baga. During the attack her son disappeared and she hasn't seen or heard from him since. Amina managed to hide with her granddaughter, risking her life to return at night to bury her husband in accordance with Islamic tradition, before fleeing to Monguno.

Toma managed to escape Baga with her husband, six children and four grandchildren. The conflict first came to her village seven years ago when her eldest daughter was kidnapped as she went to collect water one morning from the village hand pump. Then, in November last year she suddenly re-appeared, together with two children resulting from a forced marriage with a fighter. But her daughter returned in poor health and the journey from Baga to Monguno proved too arduous for her. Last week she was admitted to the local hospital and the prognosis is not good. Toma is fearful she won't come out alive.

Earning a livelihood is difficult for IDPs in Monguno. At the reception centre, women are being enrolled in weaving classes run by a local organisation. A group of 20, young and old, are learning to make an assortment of baskets and hand fans. As well as learning new skills, they are given tools and materials which should enable them to start generating some income for their families.

Defend the Rights of Journalists – Guterres



Left Photo: R-L: Chairman of the event, Professor Ralph Akinfeleye; Keynote Speaker, Dr Fassy Yusuf; HoD Mass Communication, UNILAG, Prof Abigail Ogwezy Ndisika; Director of the UN Information Centre (UNIC) Nigeria, Mr Ronald Kayanja; and National Information Officer of UNIC, Dr Oluseyi Soremekun. Right photo: Director of the UN Information Centre (UNIC) Nigeria, Mr Ronald Kayanja addresses the audience at the observance in University of Lagos

The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called on everyone to defend the rights of journalists whose efforts ‘help us to build a better world for all’. He said in his message on World Press Freedom Day presented by the Director of the UN Information Centre (UNIC) Nigeria, Mr Ronald Kayanja at the observance organised by UNIC and the Centre of Excellence, Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos on Friday, 3 May 2019 in Lagos.

The Secretary-General observed a growing number of attacks and the culture of impunity which according to UNESCO led to the death of 100 journalists and hundreds imprisoned in 2018. “When media workers are targeted, societies as a whole pay a price.” Guterres noted, “A free press is essential for peace, justice, sustainable development and human rights. No democracy is complete without access to transparent and reliable information.”

Mr Kayanja had before presenting the message of the Secretary General appealed to the Nigerian press to shun avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes about Nigeria but rather look for something good and positive to report about Nigeria. According to him, there were many rumours and unsubstantiated reports on the social media concerning the situation of things in Nigeria which unfortunately also found their way into the mainstream

media. “Nigeria is a great country. Things are not as bad in Nigeria as portrayed by the Nigeria press.” He added.

The Chairman of the event, Professor Ralph Akinfeleye, called on the Nigerian Guild of Editors and the Nigerian Union of Journalists to rise up to their responsibilities, regulate their ranks and clean up the journalistic space which he observed had been contaminated. Prof Akinfeleye called for a socially responsible free press in deepening democracy and strengthening professionalism.

The Keynote Speaker and Senior Fellow, Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos, Dr Fassy Yusuf, called on media practitioners to eschew corruption, disinformation and misinformation. “The Nigerian media should eschew corruption, tinted and fake news and other unethical practices for it to live up to its billing as the fourth estate of the realm.” He said, “If the media is to play a pivotal role in deepening and sustaining democracy, it must be socially responsible while its freedom should be non-negotiable”.

Earlier, the HoD Mass Communication, UNILAG, Prof Abigail Ogwezy Ndisika, had urged the media to be responsible and patriotic in their reporting.

This year’s theme “Media for Democracy: Journalism and Elections in Times of Disinformation” discusses current challenges faced by media in elections, along with the media’s potential in supporting peace and reconciliation processes.

Women Must be at Forefront of Peace and Development Process - Kallon

Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the United Nations Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon has reiterated that to achieve peace and development in Nigeria, women-led and women’s rights organizations should be at the forefront of the humanitarian response.

“As the UN, we are constantly working to see how we can better empower women at the frontline and involve them in the response,” he said in his opening remarks at a seminar on Call to Action and High-Level panel on “Enhancing Capacities of Women-led and Women’s Rights Organisations as First Responders in line with the Localisation Agenda.”

The main barrier, according to Mr Kallon, is that of insufficient capacity of existing actors to deliver quality and comprehensive services.

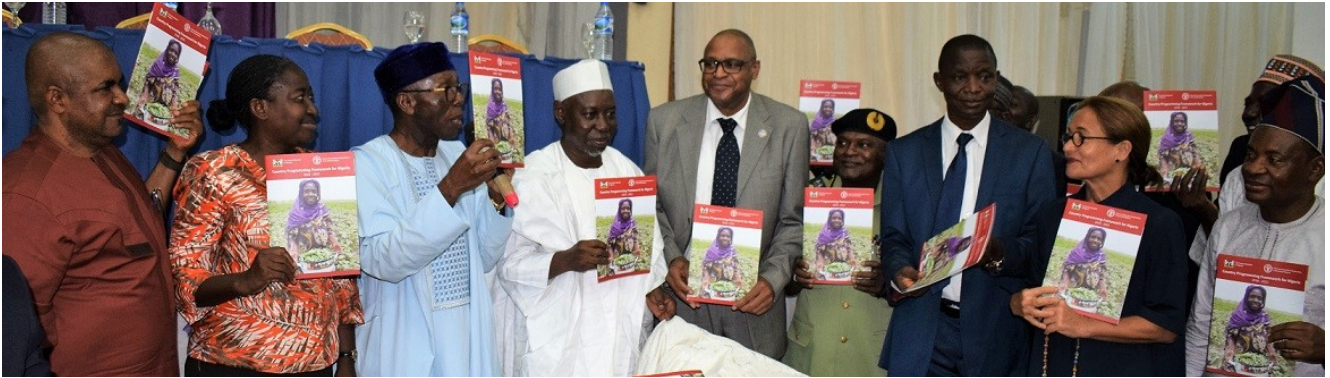
The Resident Coordinator however, acknowledged that “While humanitarian response to GBV is improving, there are still significant and urgent gaps that must be addressed in the quality and

reach of the response: Access to medical, psychosocial, legal services and livelihood of survivors, and in the delivery of essential protection and assistance.



Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the United Nations Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon, addresses the audience at the seminar

UN Unveils 5-Year Programming Strategy for Agric. Development in Nigeria



Ministers of Agriculture and Rural Development Chief Audu Ogbeh (third left) and Environment Suleiman Zarma (fourth left), FAO Country Rep Suffyan Koroma (middle) and other dignitaries present the CPF document to the public.

In Nigeria, Agriculture is the highest employer of labour, as more than 35 percent of the millions of the working population are engaged in the sector. With government of Nigeria (GoN) plan to transform agriculture from subsistence to commercialisation at small, medium or large-scale levels in place, the Food and Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) launch a 5-year programming strategy to support improve livelihood and national development.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Chief Audu Ogbeh who launched the FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) 2018 – 2022 on Tuesday 7th May 2019 commended the commitment of the UN Agency for the technical assistance and support towards meeting the country's food security needs. Noting that sustained support is required to mitigate the impact of climate change, which is fast depleting the country's natural resources.

Aligning to this, the Minister of Environment Surveyor Suleiman Hassan Zarma said FAO efforts in addressing deforestation and desertification are commendable, he prayed these interventions remain sustained for the benefit of Nigeria and the people, as spelt out in the CPF document.

This set of pillars that make up the medium term priority framework (CPF) are derived from nationally defined concerns

and objectives, targeted over a five year period of the programming cycle. For the current period (2018 -2022), the areas are to: Strengthen National Food and Nutrition Security through enhanced Nutrition Sensitive and Climate-smart Food Systems and; Support for appropriate and operationally effective agricultural policy and regulatory framework.

Others are: Support to Nigeria Economic Diversification Agenda and Promotion of Decent Employment for Youth and Women in the Agriculture Value chain; Improve efficient and sustainable management of the natural resources and ecosystem and; Enhance disaster risk reduction, resilience building and emergency management towards strengthening the Humanitarian Development nexus.

In his keynote address, FAO Country Representative in Nigeria and to ECOWAS Suffyan Koroma noted that this year marks 40years of FAO official presence in Nigeria with the full compliments of a representation and over 60 years of sustained support to the country's development.

"As we celebrate these milestones, we are mindful of the widespread and deep challenges in the areas of agriculture, natural resources management, environment and climate change. We are also aware of government's ambitious policies, plans and strategies towards addressing them." He added.

UN Mine Action Service Supports FG to Strengthen Community Resilience

In the recent months, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) provided support to national authorities aimed at bolstering their capacities to efficiently attend to explosive-related incidents, which seriously impact civilian communities in North-east Nigeria.

In this regard, UNMAS organised a First Responder training for the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) and the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). During the course, participants were provided with guidelines on how to manage a blast site, cordon an area off and facilitate access to emergency medical services in order to ensure victims of incidents are quickly attended to and that bystanders are kept at safe distances. The participants also learned how to provide basic first aid which reinforces the survivability of victims before they reach the nearest medical facility.

Moreover, with the support of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), UNMAS also organised an Emergency Trauma Bag (ETB) course in Maiduguri for the NPF Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams based in the state of Borno. Those teams are spread out across the state of Borno, precisely in the towns of Maiduguri, Biu, Bama, Ngala and Monguno where they respond to incidents involving Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and Improvised Explosive Devices (IED).

The course provided the participants with basic and advanced skills to attend to victims of incidents, particularly explosive-



Participants at the UNMAS-organised First Responder training for the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) and the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)

related incidents. After attending theory sessions on the primary steps to undertake when arriving on scene, participants were taught how to stop catastrophic bleeding which is one of the primary causes of death following incidents involving explosives.

Courses like those ones will prove to be critical in reinforcing the resilience of communities as an efficient and quick response to explosive-related incidents can considerably reduce the number of fatalities, specifically in a state where hundreds of victims of explosives have been recorded.

UN Graduates over 600 Young Women and Men on YouthMobile Project



On May 6 2019, UNESCO Abuja and the Federal Capital Territory Administration held the graduation ceremony of over 600 young women and men on the UNESCO-FCTA YouthMobile Project. Dignitaries at the event among others included Honourable Minister of FCT, Representative of the Honourable Minister of Communication, Representative of Permanent Secretary of Federal Ministry of Information, Country Directors of UNESCO, UNICEF, UNODC and UNFPA.

The project, which started in July 2017, had graduated over 400 young women and men covering two Area Councils (Abuja Municipal and Bwari Area). Following the success of the first Phase, the FCTA committed additional funds to train 600 youths on the second Phase, which covered four (4) Area Councils of the territory (Abaji, Gwagwalada, Kwali and Kuje) for over a period of ten (10) months.

In his opening remarks, the UNESCO Regional Director, Yao Ydo congratulated the beneficiaries and stimulated them to imagine the future and world they envisage for themselves and use the skills acquired to create it. He encouraged them to build the capacities of other youths around them in order to promote African values for solidarity, hospitality and mutual support. He also reiterated UNESCO's commitment towards Peace building, through Education, the Sciences, Culture, Communication and Information, saying, "UNESCO will continue to engage and collaborate with young women and men, in promoting peace, preventing violent extremism.

He further stated that out of over 600 graduands, about 48% created basic website and mobile apps, with over 135 mobile apps built. According to him, 40% of the beneficiaries have been empowered on networking and general computer hardware repairs. During the period, Yao said that UNESCO engaged some of the beneficiaries to facilitate at 2018 African Code Week. He however, requested more women participation in subsequent trainings.

The beneficiaries expressed gratitude to UNESCO for giving them the opportunity, describing the skills acquired in apps development, networking, hardware repairs and entrepreneurship as license to sustainable livelihood and a door to the world of technology. Of note is the app developed by a visually impaired young man who did not see his situation as a challenge but an opportunity to create a solution. Also of interest is the testimony of a university drop out who has used the knowledge he got from the project to get a job where he now earns almost USD1, 400 monthly.

In his address, the Honourable Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Malam Muhammad Musa Bello expressed his gratitude to UNESCO for the laudable project, which he said was effective in reducing youth unemployment. The Minister said he was proud of the achievements of the project and hope that his successor would continue to invest on the youths through ICT.

The UNESCO YouthMobile Initiative was launched globally in 2014 and is currently running in several countries of the world. It is aimed at building youth capacity to develop applications that solves local problems and promotes sustainable development.

UN, Partners Mark World Press Freedom Day, Call For Media Literacy

UNESCO Abuja in collaboration with Free Press Unlimited joined the rest of the world to celebrate the 2019 World Press freedom Day under the theme "Media for Democracy: Journalism and Elections in times of Disinformation". This year's event was organized in form of a symposium with over 170 participants in attendance, from various media houses and other key organizations.

While declaring the event open, the representative of the Honourable Minister of Information, Kehinde Ayotunde, pledged the support of the Government to uphold professionalism of journalistic practice in Nigeria.

The UNESCO Regional Director, Yao Ydo delivering the DG's message, congratulated Nigerian journalists who he said could not afford to be silenced because they remain the voice of the masses in standing for the truth. On his part, the President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, Chris Isiguzo, believed that press freedom is of serious concern in Nigeria, and that in today's era of technological advancement and misinformation, Nigerian journalists owe it to themselves "not to be identified with the monstrous phenomenon of Fake News".

Mr. Frank Mba, Public Relations Officer to Nigeria Police Force called on the media to be professional in its discharge of duties, and support the government to develop policies and programmes to help combat the menace of 'Fake News' and its im-

plications to peace and security in the society. He said the media plays a critical role by "policing the electoral process to hold policy makers accountable and call them, including the Nigeria Police, to order".

The plenary session had two papers presented: "Risks of New Technologies for Communications during Elections" and ways the media could harness these tools for improved electoral reporting and "Media for Democracy: Journalism and Elections in Times of Disinformation" by Dapo Olorunyomi of Premium Times and Mr. Lanre Arogundade of International Press Center respectively.

Mr Olorunyomi said that digital technologies have played "deleterious roles in subverting the integrity of elections and the fundamental freedom of citizens" through the spread of misinformation, disinformation, hate speech, hacking (to subvert the data security of voters, candidates, and political parties), malware attacks, arbitrary surveillance and tampering with internet and telecommunication network connections.

In his presentation, Mr Arogundade noted that the watchdog role of the media and lamented that journalists have also become targets of repression and assault of anti-democracy forces, which trample on the rights of journalists.

In a communiqué issued at the symposium, participants agreed that government and media owners should prevent and avoid censorship.

Sustaining Menstrual Hygiene Management Through Peer-to-Peer Mentorship



UNICEF Nigeria/2019/Owoicho.

No girl or woman should be left behind because of her period. In Malumfashi, a community in Katsina state of northern Nigeria, Rebecca Lazarus, dressed in her white school uniform and hijab, stands in front of her peers during the School Assembly. She is excited to share her knowledge about menstrual hygiene with the whole school. She believes that the school attendance and retention rates among girls in her school should not be affected because of their menstrual cycle.

Rebecca is one of the beneficiaries of the Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) training conducted by UNICEF in 2017. Students and women in Malumfashi Local Government Area (LGA) of Katsina State were trained on healthy practices of menstrual hygiene management.

The MHM training, which was aimed at eliminating the barriers encountered by the girls and women due to poor menstrual hygiene, included a hands-on skill acquisition programme. The women and girls in Malumfashi were trained to produce reusable sanitary pads, thereby opening them to social and economic opportunities.

The reusable sanitary pads are packaged as a kit. This kit is made up of 2 shields, 6 flannels, and 1 bag. It currently sells between N350 and N500. This is cheap compared to a disposable sanitary pad that costs between N550 and N800. At least 25 women in communities and 500 students – girls - in 5 schools (100 per school) were trained to produce these kits. They now share their knowledge and skills with others interested in learning.

The hygienic management of menstruation and production of reusable sanitary pads training has also created business opportunities for the girls and women in the community. Available record spanning January 2018 to April 2018 shows the sale of 1833 shield, 4,051 flannels, and 812 bags by those who embraced the entrepreneurial opportunity. In schools, 441 kits have been sold over the same period. Women from other communities buy the kits in quantities at the cost of about NGN400 and resell them in their villages at a profit. No report of any negative effect of using the kits has been reported. However, the women have shared concerns over the growing competition between themselves and new entrants in the reusable pad production business. Customers are being lured towards the competitors because they produce the reusable pads with a different material. In order to continue to hold a profitable share of the market, they hope to upgrade the quality of materials used for kit.

Rebecca, who is now a senior student at the Government Day Secondary School Dayi Malumfashi, also engages in an informal peer mentorship programme to share her skill in reusable pad production and knowledge of the menstrual hygiene management with other students. Her role as the health prefect of the school gives her the leverage of initiating a menstrual hygiene club in her school.

Boys are not left behind.

In five of the junior secondary schools where students have been trained, boys were sensitized on the importance of supporting girls instead of teasing during their menstrual periods.

The school principal, the club matron, and the school Parent Teacher Association (PTA) of the Government Day Secondary School Dayi Malumfashi have indicated their interest to support the establishment of MHM clubs in the school. This will include the development of a curriculum to guide the activities of the school.

The activities would include a weekly girls-talk, where club members (girls only) can discuss issues relating to menstrual health and puberty. The goal is to continue to build the confidence of the girls in the school to prevent them from skipping classes when on their period. And also encourage them to participate in extra-curricular activities of learning and playing.

With the accessibility of reusable sanitary pads and increased awareness about menstrual hygiene, women and girls can take action and contribute to their communities, whether or not they are on their period.

UN Commends EU, Sustains Partnership to Tackle Global Challenges

The Food and agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has commended the European Union (EU) for the sustained support to multilateralism and the United Nations (UN) System.



FAO Country Representative Suffyan Koroma (Left) and Head, Resilience at the EU delegation in Nigeria Ms. Montse Pantaleoni as they launched the partnership report in Abuja.

And implored them to maintain the partnership as it is essential to achieving the 2030 development agenda, currently threatened by forced migration, conflicts, climate change, environmental degradation and crisis.

The FAO Country Representative to Nigeria and the ECOWAS Suffyan Koroma gave the commendation at the official launch of the FAO-EU Partnership Report covering 2016-2017 in Abuja, where the EU Head of Health Nutrition and Resilience section, Mrs. Montse Pantaleoni represented the Ambassador of the EU Delegation in Nigeria.

Koroma said the partnership is mutually beneficial to the two agencies, as their combined expertise would support the development of Nigeria, in line with FAO strategies towards ending hunger, and making agriculture, fisheries and forestry more sustainable, in the face of the ongoing challenges of instability

For nearly 30 years, the European Union (EU) and the FAO have maintained a partnership with a record of significant achievements - like the eradication of rinderpest in 2011 and recently, the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT) that has helped secure the livelihood of smallholder farmers.

Pantaleoni said the EU is committed to working towards a better future for Nigeria and the rest of the world, through the sustainable use of resources to tackle climate change and protect biodiversity. Noting that the year under review particularly focused on resilience and food crisis, climate change and natural resources management, agricultural investment and sustainable value chains, nutrition and food systems.

ECOWAS, UN Launch Cross-Border Campaign to Promote Use of Travel Documents, Tackle Human Trafficking in Nigeria, Togo and Benin



Some participants in the itinerant campaign, organized by the ECOWAS Commission and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Nigeria, which started at the Mile 2 motor park in Lagos, through Benin Republic and Togo.

From 23 to 26 April, communities, law enforcement officers and transporters along the Nigeria-Benin and Benin-Togo borders joined an awareness raising campaign aimed at addressing the need for better border controls and security.

The campaign promoted the deployment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) National Biometric Identity Card (ENBIC), a new travel document, to promote and enhance safe mobility of ECOWAS citizens and inform the public on the dangers of human trafficking.

The itinerant campaign, organized by the ECOWAS Commission and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Nigeria, started at the Mile 2 motor park in Lagos, then travelled to the Jonquet motor park, a known hotspot for human trafficking in Cotonou, Benin Republic and finally visited the Hilla-Condji (Benin-Togo) and Seme-Krake (Benin-Nigeria) borders.

Over 900 transporters and drivers were sensitized as they are critical players in ensuring that all their passengers have valid travel documents and in reporting cases of human trafficking.

“The ECOWAS National Biometric Identity Card is a very good tool to increase movement within the ECOWAS space and reduce people migrating irregularly. Therefore, we are very grateful to have solid partners in our quest to increase safe mobility in this space, especially when it comes to the protection of ECOWAS citizens,” said Frantz Celestin, IOM Nigeria Chief of Mission.

The cross-border meetings with over 300 Nigerian, Beninese and Togolese law enforcement officers allowed the officers to highlight their obstacles and best practices as regards to the enforcement of the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocols and mitigating irregular migration. Nigerian transporters and drivers and the Road Transport Employers’ Association of Nigeria (RTEAN) also expressed their concerns about the payment of bribes, the high number of checkpoints by various law enforcement agencies and the harassment by officials at the borders during a roundtable discussion in Lagos.

The Director General of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Julie Okah-Donli, stressed the need to take necessary steps to eradicate the porous nature of ECOWAS borders through the deployment and harmonization of travel documents as thousands of young Nigerians, specifically

boys and girls, are trafficked through the Nigerian borders every year to Benin Republic, Togo Republic, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Burkina Faso and Mali.

“The ENBIC has all the features of international passports embedded in it and at any border post within ECOWAS. Any given officer will only need to swipe the card and all the information of the traveler will appear on the computer screen,” said Albert Siaw-Boateng, ECOWAS Director of Free Movement of Persons and Migration at the town hall meeting in Benin. He later added that the ENBIC will enhance the capability of ECOWAS Member States to easily share information, collect biometric data and stop criminal activities.

The engagement of border communities of Hilla-Condji and Seme-Krake included the involvement of traditional and religious and political leaders, women traders, youth, Okada (motorcycle taxi) drivers, transporters and local police. The sensitization brought to light the need to enforce strong referral mechanisms for community members to anonymously report cases of human trafficking and harassment while crossing ECOWAS borders.

“When the ECOWAS heads of state signed the protocol stating that we can move freely, they said we must move with valid travel documents. When people are moving freely, we should make sure that their rights are not violated,” said Sintiki Tarfa Ugbe, ECOWAS Director of Social Affairs and Gender.

Joining the campaign were Paulette Yekpe, Ambassador of Benin Republic to Nigeria, as well as high-level representatives from the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) and the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP).

The campaign falls under the “Support to Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa” (FMM West Africa) project jointly funded by the European Union and the ECOWAS Commission. The campaign also received support from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and the Aware Migrants project, funded by the Italian Ministry of Interior.



Traditional and Religious Leaders Join Forces to Curb Irregular Migration



Participants including traditional and faith leaders, at the training on how to combat human trafficking and support the social and psychosocial reintegration of Nigerian returnees.

On 7-8 May 2019, 29 traditional leaders, imams and priests from Edo and Delta States in southern Nigeria gathered in Abuja to exchange best practices on addressing irregular migration and combatting human trafficking.

Participants were introduced to the current trends of irregular migration in Nigeria. They also received tools to identify and report victims of trafficking and were trained on how to support the social and psychosocial reintegration of Nigerian returnees.

“As part of creating awareness and promoting sustainable reintegration, we believe that we must collectively join efforts to acknowledge and celebrate the positive role of the returned migrants here in Nigeria,” said Frantz Celestin, IOM Nigeria Chief of Mission during the opening ceremony.

The meeting enabled government, non-government and civil society actors to discuss how best to involve traditional and religious leaders in the fight against irregular migration and human trafficking.

After this meeting, traditional and religious leaders will establish networks in Edo and Delta states to cascade the awareness-raising messages to their respective communities. Terms of reference for these networks have been developed and submitted to the participants for validation during the event. The Edo State Network will be chaired by the Oba Ewuare II, the traditional ruler of Benin in Edo. The Dein of Agbor, also a traditional leader, will lead the Delta state network.

Often viewed as gatekeepers of societies, traditional and religious leaders play a vital role in the sustainable reintegration of returned migrants. Their privileged social position means that they can intervene and address negative attitudes towards returnees and showcase their contributions to their communities of origin.

Representing the Oba of Benin, Ifueko Aideyan, affirmed the Oba’s commitment to the wellbeing of Nigerian returned migrants. “The [Oba Ewuare II] Foundation is strongly behind any form of sensitization to make sure the ride to human trafficking is put to an end,” she said.

On 9 March 2018, the Oba of Benin revoked the voodoo curse used by traffickers to coerce their victims. The Oba also placed a curse on traffickers instead in a bid to empower victims to come forward and seek assistance.

Since April 2017, IOM has successfully facilitated the voluntary return of over 13,400 stranded Nigerians in the framework of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in Nigeria, with over 1,700 in 2019 alone. The aim of the Joint Initiative is to strengthen mechanisms to protect and assist migrants along migration routes, ensuring that migrants rights are respected, and that the migration process is safe and better

governed. This is done primarily through information and awareness raising campaigns aimed at providing migrants and potential migrants, including the community members with information on the returnees’ economic, social and psychosocial needs.

EU-UN Spotlight Team Begins Implementation Workshops to End Violence Against Women and Girls



The European Union – EU and the United Nations (UN) in Nigeria on 26 May 2019, kick-started the implementation of the EU-UN Joint Spotlight Initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, with an Inception Workshop held at Sokoto, North-West Nigeria. The team was received on arrival by the Governor of Sokoto State, H.E. Aminu Tambuwal at the Government House, who noted that the State would continue to key into the development initiatives of the EU and the UN in Nigeria.

Declaring the workshop open on 27 May 2019, the Governor expressed his delight at the inclusion of the State amongst the five plus one (Sokoto, Cross River, Ebonyi, Lagos, Adamawa and FCT) selected for the Spotlight project. Represented by his Deputy, Hon. Maniru Muhammad Dan’iya, the Governor acknowledged that the Spotlight Initiative project inception workshop was critical as it would enhance the engagement of all stakeholders in Sokoto State.

Addressing the participants, the Head of the UN Nigeria delegation to the State, Mr Kwasi Amankwaah, explained that the EU-UN Joint Spotlight Initiative was a global, unique, multiyear initiative focussed on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. The Civil Society, according to him, were expected to play a more active role in the spirit of leaving no one behind.

The initiative, he added, would engage community-based, grassroots CSOs across Nigeria. UNDP in Nigeria, UN Women Nigeria, UNFPA Nigeria, UNICEF Nigeria and UNESCO Regional Office Abuja are working with the European Union in Nigeria, Government and Civil Society partners on the Spotlight Initiative.

Partners Commends UN for Its Support to Nigeria, Ask for More

The year 2019 is observed across the world as the Centenary year of the ILO. The year also marks the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of the ILO in Africa, with its first African Office in Lagos, Nigeria. Celebrating the ILO in Nigeria was characterized by pouring of encomiums on the ILO for its contributions to the development of the Nigeria and humanity.



A group photograph of ILO Partners



ILO Centenary cake

The tripartite Partners of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Nigeria have commended the organization for all its support in the development of Nigeria. In their speeches at the celebration of the ILO centenary across the world and 60 years of ILO in Africa, the speakers alluded to the various supports of the ILO over the years that have contributed to the progress made so far by Nigeria.

The event which took place at Transcorp Hilton on 7th May 2019 witnessed a large turn of ILO partners – Government of Nigeria, represented by Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment; Employers, represented by Nigeria Employers Consultative Association (NECA); Nigerian workers represented by Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC). Others participants were other Ministries, Department and Agencies of the Government, Diplomatic community, Non-Governmental Organizations amongst others.

In his opening remarks, the Director of the ILO Country Office, Abuja, Mr. Dennis Zulu, expressed his delight that the ILO Centenary coincided with the celebration of 60 years of the ILO in Africa with its first African Office in Nigeria. Tracing the history of the ILO, he observed that the ILO had contributed immensely to the achievement of social justice through labour standards, development of policies and formulation of programmes that promote decent work for all. He acknowledged that the unique tripartite governing structure of the ILO has helped the partners to address issues through social dialogue.

He observed that the ILO, with cooperation of the tripartite partners have achieved a lot. He affirmed that the ILO was committed to working with its member states including Nigeria in the quest for a better future. He paid gratitude to the Government of Nigeria, Employers and Workers for their collaboration with the ILO over the years and look forward to a more strengthened partnership in the next segment of journey.

While setting the tone for the discussion, one of the discussants itemized his findings on ILO's developmental support to Nigeria into 5 parts: (a) Nigerian development trajectory over the years (b) Impacts of ILO conventions and standards ratified and domesticated in Nigeria (c) ILO projects targeted at unemployment, skill development, migration and human trafficking, among others (d) ILO efforts at strengthening Tripartism and support for Institutional development, and (e) Key actions and basic results of the ILO in Nigeria.

According to him, some of achievements of the ILO include development and implementation of different development frameworks, formulation of various policies, codes of conduct and action plans, capacity building and training of Nigerians and

institutions, institutional establishment and support. He concluded by asserting that while the last 60 years of ILO in Nigeria has been very eventful and impactful on the Nigeria socio-economic development, the next decades would definitely throw up more challenges in view of the changing world of works, insecurity, high unemployment, increasing poverty and income-inequality. According to him, these situations called for concerted efforts not only from ILO and other UN agencies but also from the constituent partners namely Government, Employment and Workers. He emphasized that it was through such synergy that the scarce resources available for developmental purposes in Nigeria could be transparently managed and judiciously utilized.

The Director-General of Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA) congratulated the ILO on its centenary and observed that besides other achievements, the ILO has contributed immensely in the areas of fraternity and peace among nations, decent work and justice for workers, technical assistance to critical stakeholders, expansion of social protection and by proactively preparing the world for tomorrow through thematic issues like future of work.

Nigeria Labour Congress and Trade Union Congress expressed their gratitude to the ILO for all the support given to their organizations and Nigeria at large. They urged member nations to strive towards improving gains of the ILO across the world. They also appealed to the ILO to do more in Nigeria in the area of skills and entrepreneurship training for Nigerian Youth in order to reduce the menace of unemployment.

In his key note address read by the Permanent Secretary, Mr. William Alo, the Honourable Minister of Labour and Employment, Dr Chris Ngige, congratulated the ILO for the milestone achievements for which all partners were delighted to be associated with.

He observed that the ILO over the years had offered and was still offering unmatched expertise and knowledge about the world of work, thereby responding to the needs of its tripartite constituents for decent work, necessary for improved livelihoods and the enthronement of sustainable development. According to the Minister, decent work was fundamental to sustainable development. He posited that the importance of decent work in achieving sustainable development was highlighted by Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals which aims to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all"

He reiterated Nigeria's commitment to walk with the ILO side by side into another century. He congratulated the ILO, the Nigerian government and all the partners even as "we continue this journey".

PHOTO NEWS



Captions, from left to right and top to bottom:

1. L-R: Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the United Nations Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon; Hon. Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Hajiya Aisha Abubakar; President of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, H.E. Ms Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces; and the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs, H.E. Princess Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire.
2. President of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, H.E. Ms Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces (Left) exchanges pleasantries with the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Geoffrey Onyeama in Abuja
3. President of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, H.E. Ms Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces (3rd from Left) in a group photograph with the Vice Chancellor of the University of Abuja, Prof Michael Adikwu (4th from Left) and other senior management staff of the University.



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