



FG Hands Over UN House, Assures of Security as Guterres Describes Gestures as Symbol of Shared Commitment to Nigerians



Federal Capital Territory Minister, Mallam Muhammad Bello (Representing President Muhammadu Buhari) cuts the ceremonial tape signifying handing over of the UN House while Mr Mark Lowcock, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, (representing the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres) 2nd from left; Resident Coordinator of UN Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon (3rd from right); Ms. Åsa Regnér, Assistant Secretary General and UN Women Deputy Executive Director (2nd from right); and Minister of Women Affairs, Hon. Dame Pauline Tallen (1st from right) look on.

The Federal Government of Nigeria has formally handed over to the United Nations, the fully renovated and furnished UN House Abuja, following the terrorist attack of 2011, and assured the organisation of its commitment to ensuring the security and protection of lives and property.

President Muhammadu Buhari made the commitment at the 74th UN Day celebration and the official handover of the rebuilt UN House on Thursday, 24 October 2019, in Abuja. Represented by the Federal Capital Territory Minister, Mallam Muhammad Bello, the President said that the Federal Government would ensure maximum protection of all UN institutions in the country.

"The Nigerian Government handing over this building to the UN is a symbol of our shared commitment to continue supporting the people and Government of Nigeria," said Mr Mark Lowcock, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, representing the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, at the occasion of the UN Day.

"Nigeria has been a key actor since it became a member of the United Nations in 1960, only eight days after its independence," he noted, "Today's reopening of the UN House in Abuja demonstrates our collective commitment to continue addressing the complex challenges facing Nigeria, west Africa, and the whole world."...continue on page 2

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ASG Åsa Regnér Visits Nigeria, Calls for more Investment in Girls' Education



Ms. Åsa Regnér, Assistant-Secretary-General and UN Women Deputy Executive Director (Left) during a courtesy call on H.E Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, in Abuja

The Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and UN Women Deputy Executive Director, Åsa Regnér, completed her first official mission to Nigeria from 21 to 25 October.

The Deputy Executive Director met with several distinguished representatives of the Nigerian government, including the Vice President of Nigeria, H.E. Prof Yemi Osinbajo; Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals, Adejoke Orelupe-Adefulire; Minister of Women Affairs, Hon. Paulyn Tallen, among others.

In her meeting with the Vice President of Nigeria, Ms. Regnér called for more investment from the Nigerian...continue on page 3

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...The Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of UN Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon thanked the Federal Government of Nigeria “for working tirelessly to rebuild and rehabilitate this UN House from the ruins of 2011 and to present back to us fully furnished and secured premises to enable us to continue our work.”

He acknowledged that the opening of the UN House presented a challenge: an expectation from the people of Nigeria to serve them with even more determination. “I know we will together rise to the occasion and leave no one behind as we build that future we want.” He added.

In her special message, the former Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the UN, Ambassador Joy Ogwu, warned that turning away from multilateral solutions would be disastrous. “We must, without doubt, count the enormous contributions of multilateralism in the number of wars not fought, lives not lost, and seemingly lasting peace we enjoy today.” She emphasised.



Mr Mark Lowcock, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, addresses the audience at the 2019 UN Day event held on 24 October in Abuja



Federal Capital Territory Minister, Mallam Muhammad Bello (Representing President Muhammadu Buhari) addresses the audience at the 2019 UN Day event held on 24 October in Abuja



Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of UN Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon, addresses the audience at the 2019 UN Day event held on 24 October in Abuja



Ms. Åsa Regnér, Assistant-Secretary-General and UN Women Deputy Executive Director, addresses the audience at the 2019 UN Day event held on 24 October in Abuja



Former Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the UN, Ambassador Joy Ogwu, addresses the audience at the 2019 UN Day event held on 24 October in Abuja



President of Federation of United Nations Staff Association (FUNSA) in Nigeria, Dr Noma Owens-Ibie, addresses the audience at the 2019 UN Day event held on 24 October in Abuja



A cross-section of the audience at the 2019 UN Day event held on 24 October in Abuja

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UN Women Deputy Executive Director Åsa Regnér (4th from left) and her team on a courtesy visit to the Vice President of Nigeria, H.E. Prof Yemi Osinbajo

...Government in girls' education and in protecting young women from sexual violence in institutions of learning.

Accompanied by UN Women Nigeria Country Representative Comfort Lamptey and UN Women Regional Director for West and Central Africa, Oulimata Sarr, Ms Regner discussed the importance of embedding gender perspectives into all aspects of implementation of the SDGs.

In her meeting with Nigeria's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Zubairu Dada, She commended Nigeria's leadership on development efforts and emphasized the need to fulfill its commitments to advance gender equality and women's rights agenda. "Everything that happens in Nigeria to move the 2030 Agenda on SDGs and the Gender Equality Agenda forward is so important because as the largest country in Africa, the world looks to Nigeria for hope and inspiration," said Ms. Regnér.

The Deputy Executive Director also stressed on the need to address the alarmingly low representation of women in decision-making and the importance of legislative and constitutional reforms in partnerships with the Government. "The upcoming 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action next year provides



UN Women Deputy Executive Director Åsa Regnér (Middle) with Mrs Adejoke Orellope-Adefulire, the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals - OSSAP-SDGs (Left); and UN Women Nigeria Country Rep, Comfort Lamptey. Photo: UN Women/Amalachukwu Ibeneme

a very important platform to showcase Nigeria's commitment to advancing gender equality," she said.

The Deputy Executive Director also had a meeting with United Nations Resident Coordinator in Nigeria, Mr. Edward Kallon, to discuss the overall political and development context, including the SDGs the national Economic Recovery and Growth Plan and the UN Reform.



UN Women Deputy Executive Director Åsa Regnér with some of UN Women Nigeria's beneficiaries during a field visit to the IDP community in Maiduguri, Borno State. Photo: UN Women/Amalachukwu Ibeneme

UN Mobilizes Women to Build Peace in Areas Affected by Farmer-Herder Conflict



Participants at the meeting with women networks and organizations in Benue State. Photo: UN Women/Amalachukwu Ibeneme

In line with its commitment to help bring a gender lens to the farmer-herder crisis in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria, UN Women in collaboration with the State Ministries of Women Affairs in Benue, Nasarawa and Taraba States organized a one-day workshop in each of the three states (on 12th, 26th September and 17th October 2019, respectively) to mobilize women and women's organizations, and strengthen their partnership, networking and cooperation on conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts on the farmer-herder conflict. The workshops were organized against the backdrop of a low representation of wom-

en within conflict resolution/peacebuilding structures in the states and at state-level briefing meetings.

The initiative is an important component of the Integrated Approach to Building Peace in Nigeria's Farmer-Herder Crisis Project, funded by the UN Peacebuilding Support Office, and being jointly implemented by UN Women, UNDP, FAO and OHCHR in close collaboration with the Governments of Benue, Nasarawa and Taraba States.

The workshops brought together a wide range of stakeholders including women and 'gender-friendly' men representing both farmer and herder communities, and Local Government Areas directly affected by the crisis, policy makers, academics, women opinion leaders at state and community levels, the media and non-governmental/civil society organizations working on women and peacebuilding concerns. High-level governmental figures in attendance included the Wives of the Governors and First Ladies of Benue and Taraba States, Wives of Local Government Chairmen, Chairpersons from the State House of Assembly, representatives from the Governors' office, Permanent Secretaries, Commissioners and Directors from Government Ministries, who would facilitate the implementation of recommendations and action points from the meetings.

One major outcome of the workshops was the agreement to establish State networks of women engaged in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

UN Mobilizes ECOWAS Committee to Eradicate Statelessness in West Africa



UNHCR's Senior Liaison Officer, Amah Assiama-Hillgartner, and the Director General of the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Muhammed Ladan, as part of the interactive session held in Abuja (Photo: UNHCR)

While definite statistics on stateless persons cannot easily be provided, UNHCR estimates that at least 10 million people around the world are stateless, of which over one million live in West Africa. Many more are believed to be at risk. Yet the phenomenon remains largely unknown.

On 15-16 October 2019, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held a two-day interactive session with the ECOWAS Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), to increase sensitization on the concept of statelessness and its consequences on the lives of affected persons and mobilize Permanent Representatives to support the ratification and implementation of relevant instruments to eradicate statelessness in West African countries.

Statelessness can mean a life without education, medical care, legal employment, freedom of movement and prospects or hope. Stateless people are often denied the rights and services that countries normally offer their citizens.

The ECOWAS region has been working towards achieving the goals set out in the global #IBelong campaign to end statelessness by 2024, launched by UNHCR five years ago. In 2015, ECOWAS countries signed the Abidjan Declaration on the Eradication of Statelessness in ECOWAS Member States, followed by the Banjul Plan of Action (POA) in 2017. Two years after the adoption of the Abidjan Declaration, twelve out of the fifteen ECOWAS Member States have acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, and eleven Member States are party to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. In two other States accession is currently underway. As part of the Abidjan Declaration, ECOWAS countries also committed to

develop National Action Plans to eradicate and prevent statelessness.

The event presented an opportunity to inform on the legal obligation of ECOWAS Member States under relevant international and regional legal instruments, while showing the significant efforts and progress achieved to date by the ECOWAS region in the eradication of statelessness.

Prof. Muhammed Ladan, Director General of the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, spoke at the interactive session reiterating that “[t]he best way policymakers can demonstrate their determination to reduce or eliminate the incidence of statelessness is to adopt national legislation that is consistent with international law, that ensures that individuals will not be arbitrarily deprived of nationality, that persons will be granted a nationality where they might otherwise be stateless, and that adequate protection will be available to those who remain or become stateless.”

He further encouraged the Permanent Representatives to obtain concrete information on the causes of statelessness and obstacles to acquisition of nationality by stateless persons, in order to design and implement appropriate strategies to address the phenomenon.

The two-day event, that brought together UNHCR, ECOWAS and the media, ended with a set of recommendations on the way forward for stakeholders to jointly support the ratification of the Statelessness Conventions and the implementation of the Banjul Plan of Action.

In closing, Ambassador Alat Mogaskia, Permanent Representative of Niger to ECOWAS and Chair of the PRC said, “I am confident that ECOWAS Ambassadors will be vanguard of leading sensitization and advocacy campaigns in Member States, to improve the protection environment in the region, particularly as it concerns finding durable solutions to statelessness issues.”

World Food Day 2019: UN Calls for Action to Enhance Healthy Diets



A cross-section of participants in the World Food Day event in Abuja.

Concerned with the rising cases of malnutrition in Nigeria, the United Nations on the occasion of the 2019 World Food Day called on Nigerians to adopt healthy diets for a better life. Commemorated every year globally on 16th October, with an adopted subject to underscore the importance of improved agriculture production and food systems, this year's theme is on "Healthy diets".

Activities for this year's event were driven by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) with the support of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO). At the Agric show/exhibition usually the high point of the weeklong celebration, the Minister Alhaji Sabo Nanono who represented President Muhammadu Buhari tasked farmers to understand that they are the key drivers of the country's development, given that "health is wealth".

Nanono said it is the responsibility of stakeholders to ensure the availability of nutritious food, as the government is committed to ensure food sufficiency, empowerment and wealth creation for farmers.

The FAO Country Representative Suffyan Koroma used the occasion to highlight the compelling need for development interventions to focus more on improved nutrition to combat multifaceted concerns bordering on undernutrition and obesity.

He charged all to take note of their consumption patterns while delivering the Goodwill message at the Agric show/exhibition venue at the Show ground km28 Abuja-Keffi road saying, concerns on the global statistics on malnutrition are rising, just like in Nigeria where the prevalence of overweight and obesity in adults keeps increasing and is currently at 7.8%.

Food that is compromised in safety and quality cannot be considered to be healthy, therefore "various entry points present during food production need to be clearly monitored; from use of pesticide and insecticides at the farming stage and storage, the preservation of the environment/surroundings and care for utensils used during food preparation", Koroma stated.

Taking from the FAO DG's speech, Koroma noted that Obesity and other forms of malnutrition affect nearly one in three people. While projections indicate that the number will be one in two by 2025. The good news is that affordable solutions exist to reduce all forms of malnutrition, but they require greater global commitment and action.

FAO proposed several actions towards improved nutrition in Nigeria (which informed the development of dietary guideline to advice policy makers on the nutrition policies and education in schools), coupled with the avowed commitment to support the government of Nigeria ensure sustainable food systems, reduce food waste and improve small holder productivity and income as well as access to markets.

Beside the need to enhance governance and coordination mechanisms, to facilitate dialogue and create incentives for different sectors and stakeholders to partner for more sustainable results to be achieved, FAO encourage the consumption of the relatively cheaper plant based protein, cutting down on industrial processed foods for improved nutrition. Even as improved data availability will guide policy formulation and implementation.

Guterres Urges Youth to be Agents of Change as IFEMUN Opens at Ile-Ife Nigeria

The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, has urged youth to be agents of change. "The United Nations counts on you to be agents of change as we strive to build a better future for all." He said at the 2nd Session of the Ife Model United Nations (IFEMUN) conference organised by Obafemi Awolowo University in collaboration with the United Nations Information Centre - UNIC, Nigeria, on 27- 30 October 2019.

Presenting the message of the Secretary-General to IFEMUN, the National Information Officer of UNIC, Oluseyi Soremekun, noted that youth were the first generation to grow up in the shadow of climate change and the last who could prevent its worst consequences. "The world needs your strong engagement to increase ambition, to cut emissions and to hold leaders to account." He said.

"To achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals", the Secretary General continued, "we need a great global mobilization that goes beyond governments, bringing people together from all walks of life and showing that international cooperation can deliver for everyone. The voices of women and girls, and of young people, are essential."

According to him, that is why the Model United Nations is so important. He therefore, urged the delegates to take what they learned at the conference into their lives, their family and friends and to the wider world.

In his keynote address, the Managing Director/CEO of New



National Information Officer of UNIC in Nigeria, Oluseyi Soremekun

Horizons, Mr Tim Akano, enjoined the delegates to acquire skills beyond their certificates. "Certificates matter but skills in emerging technology take you to the top", he added, "What got me employment 30 years ago cannot get you employment today".

The President of the Second Session of the Ife Model United Nations (IFEMUN) General Assembly was Mr Muhammed Mubarak while Mr Paul Ogbolo was the Secretary General.

Poor Diets Damaging Children's Health Worldwide and in Nigeria, Warns UN



In Nigeria, malnutrition remains a major public health and development concern: 49 percent of children under five years of age are not growing well (they are either stunted, wasted or overweight). © UNICEF Nigeria/2015/Rich.

In Nigeria, 5 in 10 children under five are malnourished (stunted, wasted or overweight) while 3 in 10 children aged 6 to 23 months live on poor diets. This indicates that an alarmingly high number of children are suffering the consequences of a food system that is failing them.

As the United Nations and partners commemorated World Food Day, UNICEF released a new report on nutrition titled 'The State of the World's Children 2019: Children, food and nutrition'. The report finds that at least 1 in 3 children under five – or 200 million – is either undernourished or overweight. Almost 2 in 3 children between six months and two years of age are not fed food that supports their rapidly growing bodies and brains. This puts them at risk of poor brain development, weak learning, low immunity, increased infections and, in many cases, death.

The report provides the most comprehensive assessment yet of 21st century child malnutrition in all its forms. It describes a triple burden of malnutrition: Undernutrition, hidden hunger caused by a lack of essential nutrients, and overweight among children under the age of five, noting that around the world, 149 million children are stunted, or too short for their age, including 13.1 million children in Nigeria. In addition, the report highlights that 50 million children are wasted, or too thin for their height, including 2.9 million children in Nigeria.

The report warns that poor eating and feeding practices start from the earliest days of a child's life. Though breastfeeding can save lives, for example, in Nigeria, only 27 per cent of children under six months of age are exclusively breastfed and an increasing number of children are fed infant formula. This means many Nigerian children are missing out on the life-saving benefits of breastmilk which is a baby's first vaccine and offers the best possible nutrition at the start of life.

In Nigeria, malnutrition remains a major public health and development concern: 49 percent of children under five years of

age are not growing well (they are either stunted, wasted or overweight). This is the second highest proportion after the Democratic Republic of Congo in the West and Central Africa region. This is partly because 34 percent of children between six months and two years of age are fed food that is not rich and diversified enough to ensure optimal growth.

As children begin transitioning to soft or solid foods around the six-month mark, too many are introduced to the wrong kind of diet, according to the report. As children grow older, their exposure to unhealthy food becomes alarming, driven largely by inappropriate marketing and advertising, the abundance of ultra-processed foods in cities but also in remote areas, and increasing access to fast food and highly sweetened beverages.

The report also notes that climate-related disasters cause severe food crises. Drought, for example, is responsible for 80 per cent of damage and losses in agriculture globally, dramatically altering what food is available to children and families, as well as the quality and price of that food; Nigeria is also affected by climate change.

To address the growing malnutrition crisis in all its forms, UNICEF is issuing an urgent appeal to government, the private sector, donors, parents, families and businesses to help children grow healthy by investing more resources in interventions aimed at preventing malnutrition among young children and supporting treatment when prevention fails. UNICEF is also advocating for support for nursing mothers to adequately feed and care for their children; empowering families, children and young people to demand nutritious food; driving food suppliers to do the right thing for children by incentivizing the provision of healthy, convenient and affordable foods; building healthy food environments for children and adolescents, mobilizing supportive systems to scale up nutrition results for all children; and collecting, analyzing and using good-quality data and evidence to guide action and track progress.

Nigeria's First National Migration Database to Harness Data for Development



Migrants participating in migration data capture process

Timely data on migration are often scarce, making it difficult for decision-makers to develop effective migration policies. If migration statistics exist, data are often scattered between different stakeholders making the sharing of data challenging. For this reason, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) handed over last week the first National Migration Database to the Federal Government of Nigeria at a ceremony that brought together over 100 government officials, donors, and partners working on migration data management in Nigeria.

The new platform aims to enhance the sharing of timely and disaggregated migration data and to improve policymaking in Africa's most populous country. On the long term, the database portal will also help Nigerian ministries, agencies and departments who already collect migration-related data to make informed and evidence-based decisions on migration issues.

Through the portal, data related to returning migrants, foreign nationals entering, residing in and leaving Nigeria and other population movements within the country will be shared via one centralized platform.

"Nigeria's migration data model is referenced in other African countries," said Abraham Tamrat, IOM Nigeria Programme Manager. "We therefore urge all relevant actors to ensure that the database is populated with harmonized migration data for better migration management in the country."

IOM provided technical support in the design and development of the database while ensuring that the Nigerian government has the full and exclusive ownership of the data. IOM advises the Nigerian government on how to implement the necessary institutional, technical and physical safeguards to strengthen current data protection practices in line with international standards.

"Nigeria's response to migration has shifted from a problem to be solved to a reality with challenges to be managed," said Basheer Mohammed, Federal Commissioner of the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and IDPs (NCFRMI). "The launch of the database is a watershed moment for migration management in Nigeria."

As part of the official handover, the National Population Commission will receive nine computer systems for as many government bodies including the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria Immigration Service, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, among others.

IOM activities in Nigeria harness data as a key element of well-managed migration by deploying tools such as the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). DTM is the lead source of information on population movements in the country's conflict-affected north-east, and it aims to track and provide up-to-date information on sudden displacement and other population movements and assess the needs of displaced individuals.

The National Population Commission of Nigeria will lead the implementation of the National Migration Database and supervise the installation and operations of the equipment. The database was developed within the policy and governance component of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration funded by the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

E-waste Mgt. Linked to Actualisation of SDGs as UN, Partners Mark Int'l e-waste Day

Stakeholders at the first ever commemoration of e-waste Day in Nigeria have identified sustainable management of e-waste as a critical success factor for the actualisation of some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets.

"With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the issue of e-waste management had become part of the broader quest for sustainability, including through sustainable production and consumption and shaping a future that works for all at all stages in the circular economy." Said the Director of the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Lagos, Mr Ronald Kayanja, at the observance organised by UNIC Lagos; United Nations Industrial Development Organization, UNIDO; International Labour Organisation, ILO; National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency, (NESREA); Lagos State Ministry of Environment and Waste Resources; Lagos State Environment Protection Agency (LASEPA) and E-waste Producer Responsibility Organisation Nigeria (EPRON).

Kayanja explained that SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing; SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation; SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth; SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities; SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production; and SDG 14: Life below water, were all connected to responses to e-waste management."

The Director General of NESREA, Professor Aliyu Jauro, emphasised the mandate of the Agency to include enforcement of all environmental laws, guidelines, policies, standards and regulations in Nigeria; and prohibition of processes and the use of equipment or technology that undermine environmental quality.

In his presentation on "E-waste Global Solutions: Best Practices and Experience Sharing", Mr Oluyomi Banjo of UNIDO stated that Nigeria generated 263,030 tonnes of E-waste in 2012 and pointed that UNIDO would continue to provide support to countries in developing an e-waste management strategy.

Ms Chinyere Emeka-Anuna of ILO submitted that e-waste had become one of the fastest growing streams of waste and had maintained a consistent threat to human health, decent work and the environment.

The General Manager, Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency, (LASEPA) Dr. Adedolapo Ayokunle Fasawe said Lagos, being the biggest West African market for new and used electric and electronic equipment, has a great role to play in E-waste management in Nigeria.

Executive Secretary EPRON, Mrs Ibukun Faluyi, solicited for compliance with the model established for collection and recycling of e-waste.



Director of the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Lagos, Mr Ronald Kayanja (Left) and other partners during the e-waste Day walk in Lagos.

Theatre Helps Raise Awareness on Human Trafficking in Most Affected Regions in Nigeria



Community theatre cast on set in Benin.

The city of Benin in southern Nigeria was once the capital of the former Edo Kingdom of Benin, one of the oldest states in West Africa. It dates back to the 11th century. Little remains of that kingdom. The once-mighty city is now the main “sender” place of origin of Nigerians migrating irregularly towards Libya in search of greener pastures in Europe.

To inform local youth about trafficking in persons and other risks of irregular migration, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) organized on 18 October three theatre performances in the Edo state capital. Those performances marked the completion of an eight-month training in 17 communities in Edo and Delta states, two key migration-prone areas in Africa’s most populous country.

The open-air event brought together close to 100 individuals, who gathered to raise awareness about the plight of thousands of people who have suffered deception, abuse and exploitation along their migration journeys. Since early 2017, IOM has assisted some 15,171 men and women to voluntarily return to Nigeria. Most returned from Libya, Niger and Mali under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration.

Of those, 42 per cent came from Edo. The theatre project grouped 44 men and 33 women into five troupes performing 47 shows in 115 communities in Edo and Delta. From July through September this summer, those performances reached 8,403 individuals.

“Most of the actors are seeing theatre for the first time, so the training wasn’t easy. But I’m elated with the outcome,” said Lancelot Imasuen, a renown Nollywood filmmaker who led the project. “A lot of these people have the talent to pursue acting, some of them are even performing at the national arts and culture festival taking place this week in Benin City.”

Together with Imasuen, IOM helped audition the actors and performers and equipped them with materials, musical instruments and props. Imasuen, who directed the three plays titled *Empty Waka*, *Dance of the Migrants* and *Trafficked* trained the participants on directing, script development, stage management, set and costume design, and make-up.

“We selected returnees, students, potential migrants, and their families to promote social cohesion as we have witnessed that many returnees face stigmatization upon return to their communities,” explained Cyprine Cheptepkeny, IOM Nigeria Awareness Raising Officer. “We chose theatre as an awareness raising tool to pass on the message in an entertaining way, going beyond the traditional information channels,” she added.

Those watching the plays in markets and other public spaces say they have been impacted by the stories. At one performance, a woman among the audience shared the story of her daughter. Based on that testimony, IOM was able to identify the daughter as a victim of trafficking. Following further investigation, IOM staff referred the case to the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP).

“In ancient Greece, theatre was seen as an instrument for social development and a means to express belief, approval or disapproval, pain and suffering,” said Eleni Zerzelidou, EU Project Officer, Migration and Drugs. “Community theatre nowadays goes beyond that. It comes from the community and it can help the community develop capacities for critical thinking on human trafficking and other issues affecting them.”

This project is part of IOM’s wider efforts to promote safe migration channels in Nigeria. At the end of October, IOM will organize the ‘Music for Safe Migration’ concert in Benin City, among other sensitization activities. The event was funded by the European Union through the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

UN Pledges Support for Michael Imoudu National Institute for Labour Studies

The Michael Imoudu National Institute for Labour Studies (MINILS) addresses Human Rights issues within employment relations through their 2019 Public Lecture and National Dialogue, on the theme "Casting Human Rights in Employment Relations Mould: From State to Workplace Perspective", held in Ilorin, on 31st October 2019.



Director of the ILO Country Office for Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and Liaison Office for ECOWAS, Mr. Dennis Zulu, addresses the audience at the Michael Imoudu National Institute for Labour Studies (MINILS), Ilorin, Kwara State on 31 October.

The Director of the ILO Country Office for Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and Liaison Office for ECOWAS, Mr. Dennis Zulu, has pledged ILO's support to the Michael Imoudu National Institute for Labour Studies (MINILS). He made the pledge in response to a presentation made on areas for possible ILO intervention during the MINILS 2019 Annual Public Lecture and National Dialogue, which had as its theme "Casting Human Rights in Employment Relations Mould: From State to Workplace Perspective". The Public Lecture which was organized in conjunction with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) held on 31st October 2019 at MINILS campus in Ilorin, Kwara State.

While delivering his good will message at the event, Mr. Zulu acknowledged with appreciation the Institute's contributions to debates on key labour issues that are of interest to the ILO. According to him, the public lecture was of a great relevance to the ILO's objectives as it celebrates its centenary in 2019. He stated that right from its inception in 1919, the ILO has been using Standards to address workers' rights globally and at the workplace. He used the opportunity to congratulate Nigeria for being the first African Country to host both the First African Office of the ILO in 1959 and the First ILO African Regional Conference in Lagos from 5-16 December 1960.

He stated that the ILO's engagement with MINILS since its inception has yielded positive results over the years and has affected labour administration in Nigeria positively. He was optimistic that ILO's continuous engagement with MINILS, partners and other relevant stakeholders would bring more benefits to Nigerians. He commended MINILS for taking the initiative to share information and good practices on labour issues and pledged the ILO's support to some of the activities and programmes of the institute to enable the institute impact positively on the beneficiaries of such programmes.

In his goodwill message, the NLC General Secretary, Comrade Emmanuel Ugboaja, commended the ILO for adopting a number of conventions and recommendations to moderate industrial relations in the work place. He listed them as the convention of Freedom of Association, Organizing, Collective Bargaining, Full and Productive Employment, Elimination of all Forms of Forced Labour, Abolition of Child Labour and the Elimination of Discrimi-

nation in Employment and Occupation. He urged workers and employers to use these standards to demand their rights.

Mr. Saliu Alabi, Director-General of MINILS, in his welcome address gave a detailed overview of the strategic nature of the theme of the lecture. Mr. Saliu Alabi, speaking on the theme of the lecture, said that human rights are key elements in overall strategy for engendering decent jobs as well as transforming employment relationships and work place practices. "There is increasing consensus that the workplace is a critical platform upon which development processes could be fostered, at both strategic and operational levels" he said. He further commended the Ministry of Labour and Employment and several other partners including ILO for their support to the institute and implored that the Dialogue would give momentum to the cause of human rights and employment relations in Nigeria.

Remarks were made by a representative of the Executive Governor of Kwara State, His Excellency Alhaji Abdulrahman Abdulrazak. Declaring the lecture open, the State Governor stated that its government had done their best to ensure that everyone was accorded their rights within the confines of the law. Alhaji Abdulrazak assured the gathering of his government's continuous efforts to ensure that issues relating to human rights are tackled especially that relating to minimum wage. He also maintained that Kwara is "leading the charge" in restoring and protecting basic human rights and working towards UN SDGs especially the rights of women and young girls to fair representation, inclusion and decent empowerment.

From the panel discussions, various recommendations were made on how to promote human rights and workplace practices. Amongst those who participated at the public lecture and made contributions were the Acting Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Dr. Folasade Yemi-Esan; Acting President, National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN), Hon. Justice Benedict Bakwaph Kanyip; and Chief Femi Falana, SAN. Chief Falana lauded judges of the NICN for deciding labour matters in line with the provisions of the ILO conventions and international best practices).

The Michael Imoudu National Institute for Labour Studies (MINILS) is Nigeria's foremost institute for labour education aimed at building the capacity of workers and their unions.

PHOTO NEWS



Captions, from left to right and top to bottom:

1. A cross-section of dignitaries at the 2019 UN Day and official handover of UN House by the government of Nigeria on 24 October.
2. FAO Representative, Suffyan Koroma presents a souvenir to the representative of the President, the FCT Minister Mohammed Bello at the FAO stand during the UN Day exhibition on 24 October in Abuja. Photo: FAO/David Tsokar
3. Dignitaries at the WFP stand during the UN Day exhibition on 24 October in Abuja.
4. UNODC Representative, Mr Oliver Stolpe and Acting Chairman Economic & Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Ibrahim Magu cut a cake at the UNODC stand during the UN Day exhibition on 24 October in Abuja.
5. A group of Ushers at the UN Day event held on 24 October at the UN House Abuja
6. UNESCO Abuja Regional Office, Mr Yao Ydo, briefs dignitaries at the UNESCO stand during the UN Day exhibition on 24 October in Abuja.



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