

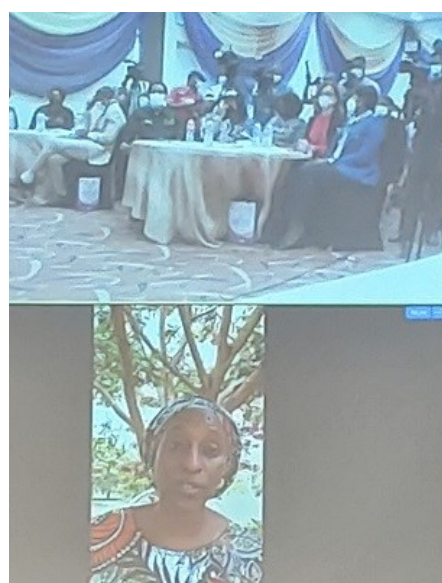
MAY 2021



NEWSLETTER



“We Want More People To Join The Fight Against SGBV” Says Dolapo Osinbajo As Lagos, UN, EU Launch 24/7 Helpline For Gender-Based Survivors



UNFPA ambassador and Nollywood actress, Stephanie Okereke Linus; Country Representative of the UNFPA, Ms Ulla Mueller; and Wife of Lagos State governor, Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu. Right (Online): Wife of the Vice President and founder, The Women’s Helping Hand initiative, Mrs. Dolapo Osinbajo.

Wife of the Vice President and founder, The Women’s Helping Hand initiative, Mrs. Dolapo Osinbajo, has acknowledged that more people were needed in the fight against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Nigeria.

“As we speak right now, a woman is being exploited and abused, trapped with no one to help. This kind of woman needs our help, even if it’s virtually. We must help and rescue her. We want more people to join the fight against SGBV and ensure stricter punishments for perpetrators.” She said at the launch of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Virtual Response and Referral System in Lagos.

Launched by the Lagos Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team (DSVRT) in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and The Women’s Helping Hand Initiative, under the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, the virtual platform would provide a 24-hour clock service with uninterrupted access to trained service providers using free toll line 08000333333.

Furthermore, it would provide callers with access to clinical management of rape on the portal, Psychosocial Support (PSS), security and access to justice, all free of charge.

Country Representative of the UNFPA, Ms Ulla Mueller described gender-based violence as a gross violation of human rights, and noted that providing accessible gender-based violence service was a step in attaining the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

According to her, the UN Nigerian Demographical Survey of 2018 showed that 27.7 per cent of women in Lagos have experienced physical violence before the age of 15, noting that that is more than 2.5 million women in Lagos alone.

HIGHLIGHTS

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Wife of Lagos State governor, Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu, pointed out that it was expected that with the rise of social media, technology in reportage and documentation of SGBV would be embraced. “We’ve put several measures in place, using a multi-sectorial approach, led by the office of the first lady. “The state House of Assembly has promised that in the next two weeks, the bill establishing the sexual offenders register will finally pass.” She added.



How Citizen Advocates Are Ending Child Bride Customs For Good



Chief Egu*, 65, comes from the Belegatte community in Cross River, Nigeria. Like many men in his community, his marriage came about through the ‘money-woman’ custom — a practice in which a girl is betrothed to a man who spends money on her family or in order to settle a family debt.

In Chief Egu’s case, he had loaned money to a man from a neighbouring community who needed it for his sick brother. When Chief Egu asked to be repaid, he was offered the sick man’s daughter, Ann*, instead. He agreed to marry Ann, who was just 13 at the time, in exchange for the ₦35,000 (around \$92) owed to him. Several days later, Ann was sent to her new home in Belegatte community.

Their seven-year marriage produced two children and Ann never had the opportunity to return to school. Instead, she joined her husband in farming and helped care for the family.

“It was not a happy marriage,” says Chief Egu. “Ann was too young and she was married off against her will. She was unhappy for most of the marriage.”

Changing norms, one community at a time

According to UNICEF, an estimated 44 per cent of girls in Nigeria are married before their 18th birthday. The country has the 11th highest rate of child marriage in the world. In Belegatte and several other communities in the area, the ‘money-woman’ tradition is common.

“The tradition is not strange to me, it started from our forefathers,” says Chief Egu. “My father, uncle, and brothers practised it too.” He adds that there are traditional and spiritual consequences for any family or girl that breaks the agreement.

The road ahead

Across Nigeria, Spotlight Initiative supports gender sensitization sessions like the one the co-chief attended in an effort to turn community influencers into activists. In Cross River, many of these sessions are carried out by the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy & Development (Centre LSD), an NGO and think tank dedicated to sustainable development and citizen advocacy. In 2020, the organization reached more than 1000 people with targeted messages on ending violence against women and girls,

according Centre LSD Programme Manager Vincent Dania. Many, like Chief Egu, continue to be reached indirectly through trained advocates in their community.

Last year, the Initiative also partnered with the Federal and State Ministry of Women Affairs and other organizations to hold a press conference on the ‘money-woman’ custom. At the conference, the Paramount Ruler of Obanliku local government Chief Uchua Amos Uyumulam Itam and clan head of Becheve community Chief Sunday Ichile denounced the custom and called for its abandonment. “We must end this tradition that locks our families into generations of poverty,” they said.

While the Child Rights Act sets the minimum age for marriage at 18, not every state in Nigeria has adopted it and those that have often struggle to implement the law. This makes the support of leaders like the chiefs critical to lasting and sustainable change.

While survivors like Ann have been able to return home, others remain trapped. The Council of Chiefs, a body of traditional leaders that govern communities in Nigeria, has now introduced fines for anyone in their communities found to be practising the custom. At the same time, education and sensitization sessions on the consequences of ‘money-woman’ and similar harmful practices are carried out within communities themselves. The COVID-19 pandemic has made action even more essential, with UNICEF estimating as many as 10 million more girls are at risk of child marriage worldwide as a result of the pandemic.

Ann, now 20, is happy to be back home and intends to return to school. Chief Egu has agreed to pay her school fees and to continue providing for their children.

Chief Egu’s marriage to Ann came to an end when, during a village council meeting, a co-chief who had attended Spotlight Initiative-supported meetings spoke about the impact of harmful practices in the community. The co-chief explained that the ‘money-woman’ tradition was a violation of a girl’s human rights and perpetuated poverty in the community by removing children from school. He was moved and made the decision to return Ann and their children to her family. Ann’s parents were initially reluctant, as they feared they would have to pay back the money. However, the chief agreed not to be repaid and Ann was able to rejoin her family.



Spotlight Initiative



EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls

Council Of Traditional Rulers Renews Commitment To End Gender Discrimination, Violence Against Women In Nigeria



UN Women Country Representative, Ms. Comfort Lamptey (Middle) and other dignitaries at the meeting

The Council of Traditional/Cultural Leaders of Africa (COTLA) has said it will redouble its efforts to end violence against women, all forms of gender discrimination and harmful traditional practices in Nigeria.

This was part of the resolutions made at a meeting between the leadership of COTLA and UN Women in Nigeria in Abuja, supported by the joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to end all forms of violence against women and girls.

In his opening remarks, the Convener General of COTLA, HRM (Arc.) King Adedapo Aderemi said he appreciated the efforts of UN Women and reiterated his solidarity and commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Nigeria. He pointed out that COVID-19 has exacerbated poverty in society, particularly for women who have had to face numerous challenges trying to care for the family.

"Due to lockdown, reports show an alarming increase in the shadow pandemic violence against women and girls," he said. "Poor access to services such as counselling, police protection, long-term closure of schools due to COVID-19 and bandits have exposed girls to gender-based violence (GBV), child marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM) and unintended pregnancy as well as health challenges such as HIV.

"Child labour, sexual exploitation and abuse have increased. As COTLA we are not bystanders, we are active advocates for laws and policies, ending early and child marriage in our communities, and creating safe spaces."

Earlier in her welcome address, the UN Women Country Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ms. Comfort Lamptey, highlighted

the important role of traditional leaders in ending violence against women, gender equality and women's empowerment.

Also speaking, the Deputy Convener-General of COTLA, HRH Dr Haliru Yahaya Ndanusa, said that as community leaders, COTLA will galvanize efforts within its base to end violence against women.

In a goodwill message, the Obong of Calabar, Royal Eminence Chief (Barr.) Edem Duke through his representative said the monarch is relentlessly working towards gender equality and women's empowerment. He said he has repealed and amended harmful traditional beliefs and practices and upheld widowhood rights, among other reforms. He said he is working with Spotlight Initiative through the International Federation of Women Lawyers Nigeria (FIDA) to ensure access to justice and essential services for women who have been victimized.

Other speakers, including the Emir of Bwari, Alhaji Awwal Musa Ijokoro (II); HRH Eze Martin Nwali of Ameka Ezza South, Ebonyi State; HRH Eze Ngozi of Abia State; Dr Ahmad Ibrahim Mustafa Ubandoma, District Head of Girie in Adamawa and Alh Kabiru Chigari Alhassan, Sarkin Sudan, Sultanate Council of Sokoto, committed to ending GBV while also testifying to the work the Spotlight Initiative has done in mobilizing and sensitizing local communities towards eradicating gender-based violence and discrimination.

The Spotlight Initiative, through UN Women and COTLA, agreed to implement a strategic plan to accelerate the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls.



Spotlight Initiative



EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls

Back To School For Girls And Women With Disabilities In Nigeria



I fuoma Oga’s mother was unable to care for her when she was born, so she was sent to another state to live with a relative. There, she attended elementary school and sold peanuts to help support the family.

While in third grade, she was selling peanuts in the street when she was hit by a car. Doctors were forced to amputate her leg, and it took two years for Ms. Oga to learn to walk with crutches. Even so, she says the worst part was being kept home from school.

“The saddest part for me was not being able to continue with my education for a long time,” she says, now in her twenties. “I lost touch with what the classroom looks like, I didn’t see my friends and I was always shy to go out as people often stared at me.” Ms. Oga felt isolated.

Sadly, she is far from alone. UNICEF reports that nearly 50 per cent of the world’s 93 million children with disabilities are out of school. The out-of-school rate for children without disabilities is much lower, at 13 per cent.

Deprived of an education, children with disabilities are less likely to thrive as adults, and less likely to find fulfilling, well paid work.

They are also more vulnerable to violence, including gender-based violence.

A change in fortune

Last year, Ms. Oga’s community was visited by a door-knocking campaign to raise awareness about a new programme called Accelerated Second Chance Education. The Spotlight Initiative-supported programme aims to give children who haven’t completed their schooling a pathway back to education.

The project is dearly needed in Nigeria, which is home to one in five of the world’s out-of-school children.

Ms. Oga joined the programme, and, among other subjects, studied English. “I am battling with spelling, but surely I will improve,” she says of the challenge.

Though she is often quiet among friends, she says that the classes in English, life skills, and sexual and reproductive health and rights have helped her come out of her shell.

“I was able to gradually build my confidence,” she explains. That confidence is an important lift for Ms. Oga and others like her, who are more likely to be marginalized by their families and communities.

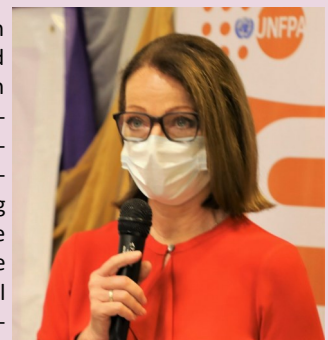
Ms. Oga graduated from the programme in March 2021, joining 60,000 women and girls who have completed the programme nationally.

Ensuring that all women and girls are able to exercise their rights, including their right to education and a life free from violence, will require systemic change to education, work and social services — but it can be done. Ms. Oga is proof.

“I hope that other children and young people with disabilities are able to get the same chance that I did,” she says.

UN Establishes Inter-Agency Group On Youth

The United Nations System in Nigeria has established an Inter-agency Group on Youth, to increase the effectiveness of UN work in youth development by strengthening collaboration and exchange among all relevant UN entities, while respecting and harnessing the benefits of their individual strengths and unique approaches and mandates.



Chaired by the Country Representative of UNFPA, Ms Ulla Mueller, the Group provides oversight and technical guidance in the rollout and implementation of the UN Youth Strategy (Youth 2030); Ensures that UN system monitoring and reporting systems adequately measure and document progress on youth development; Identifies key joint priorities and plan collaboratively to implement related initiatives based on the members’ work plans, within existing resources; and shares good practices to promote effective cooperation among members in programming at country and regional levels; among others.

Nigeria is home to a large population of young people, it is important that Nigeria make investments in youth towards harnessing the demographic dividend. This is seen as the continent’s strategic path towards meeting its aspirations and objectives as set forth in Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.



UN Supports National Health Insurance Scheme To Ensure Sustainability

Towards ensuring universal health coverage for all individual residents in Nigeria by 2030, the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) with the support of the International Labour Organization, under the the Joint SDG Fund project, is assessing the NHIS financial feasibility of parametric changes to their formal sector scheme, and in particular to determine the cost implication of implementing the new benefits packages, services and tariffs and necessary parametric adjustment to maintain the overall financial sustainability.

This assessment will constitute the basis for a revision of their largest scheme and the improvement of processes leading to a higher quality of service. Assessing the scheme will at the same time produce valuable insights on the institutional, financial and administrative management of the NHIS. Such analysis can be used by NHIS to formulate recommendations for more effective support to the State Health Insurance Schemes in their extension, operations, and introduction of a new benefits package.

To begin the process of the assessment, the ILO trained the staff of the NHIS on the use of the ILO HEALTH MODEL for actuarial valuation. The purpose of the 2 days meeting was for the technical team to have hands-on experience with the data entry and cleaning of the completed health facility survey and non-health facility component.

During training, the ILO technical team put the participants through the ILO HEALTH MODEL, Data collection exercise, Data cleaning process, and the importance of an actuarial valuation to the sustainability of social security institutions.



A cross-section of participants at the training

Speaking on the importance of the training, Dr. Kurfi Abubakar who represented the Executive secretary of the NHIS.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has further pushed individuals into poverty and increase the need for health care. as a result, we need to be more committed to the goal of extending coverage to all individual residents in Nigeria by 2030. An Assessment of the financial sustainability of the scheme is one of the steps towards achieving the UHC goal by 2030, I am proud of this initiative and we are grateful to the ILO for supporting the process.

The ILO National Project Officer, Social Protection, Mr. Segun Tekun said, "The actuarial valuation will allow for the identification of future financial imbalances that might threaten the Scheme's financial sustainability and a conversation on possible adjustments to re-establish long-term financial stability. "

FG, UN Host Private Sector Consultation Review of Social Protection Policy

In a bid to institutionalize Social Protection for Accelerated SDG Implementation in Nigeria, the Federal Government is in the process of finalizing the new National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) document. Some of the activities in this process include presenting the policy document to the private sector for input and conducting sensitization on fiscal space for social protection to accelerate funding.

This consultation was supported by UNDP in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning, with funding from the Joint SDG Fund. The private sector was well represented during the consultation and made some valuable contributions to the NSPP document.

The outcomes of the consultation included some innovative financing strategies: Government at all levels to set aside a defined percentage of their revenue for social protection; A federal tax scheme to evolve with minimal reliance on the private sector and to function outside traditional government budgetary process; and Private sector investments geared towards social protection.

Furthermore, the private sector saw the need for comprehensive and accessible data and promised to work with the government to provide available sources within the sector. This will strengthen data availability for social protection.

The consultation with the private sector revealed several opportunities for investments in social protection. It also provided a better understanding of social protection to representatives of the different sectors present at the consultation.



Dr. Depo Faniran, Deputy Director of Social Development, Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning



A cross-section of participants at the training



Capacity Needs Assessment For The Joint UN-SDG Programme in Sokoto



The Needs Assessment team members

The right to food and nutrition has faced severe challenges in Nigeria due to poverty and insecurity in the country – particularly in the Northeast and the Northwest. Access to quality basic services is also in deficit. The government authorities, with support from the UN, are striving to address these challenges in an effort to achieve the goals set by the sustainable development agenda.

Sokoto State, located in the Sahel zone and the northwest of Nigeria, ranks among the Nigerian states with the lowest human development indices, particularly for health, nutrition and education. However, Sokoto State has shown a keen appetite to change its situation. Sokoto State has successfully turned a previously UN-led cash transfer scheme, the “Girls Education Project,” reducing gender gaps in public primary schooling, into a state-run programme and has recently passed a law that guarantees a universal health coverage for the people of the state.

Sokoto State has also set up a coordinating secretariat to provide direction towards achieving the goal of Zero Hunger by 2030. The UN joint programme is a flagship project that supports the institutionalization and implementation of the National Social Protection Policy in Sokoto, a UN Delivery as One state. This will serve as a model for effective and efficient implementation of social protection programmes in the country.

The joint programme focuses on children, adolescents, the elderly and women – including pregnant and breastfeeding women, while addressing disparities they face in health, education and nutrition, using cash transfer and social health insurance. By connecting health insurance to a cash transfer programme, the project is exploring innovative routes in social protection, with the double aim to increase impact as well as establishing sustainable, effective and efficient social protection collaboration in Sokoto State.

The one UN concept brought together some key UN agencies (UNICEF, WFP, UNDP and ILO) working on social protection by jointly institutionalizing social protection for accelerated sustainable goals implementation in Nigeria.

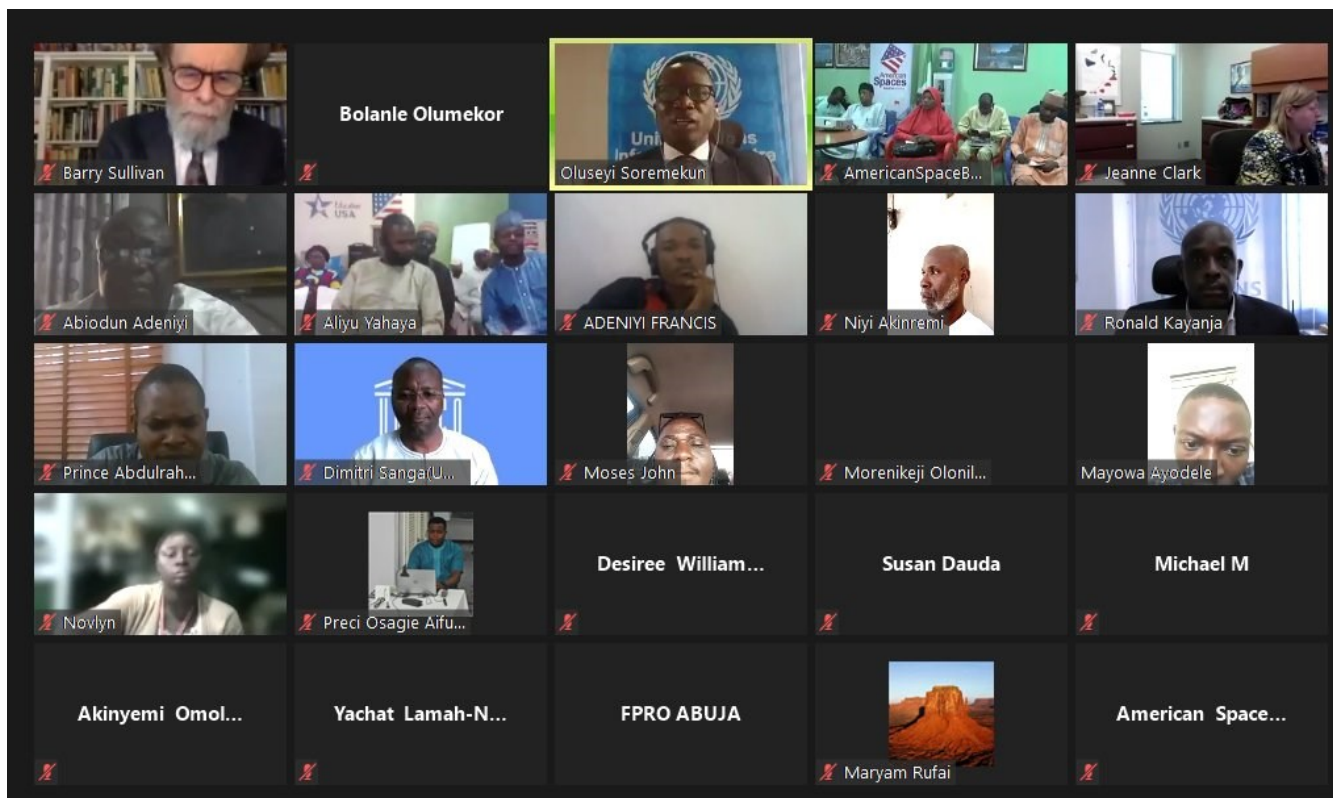
As a part of the programme, and in support of broader efforts to engage with the government on shock-responsive social protection in the Northwest, WFP led a field mission to Sokoto in April 2021 to assess the capacity needs and frameworks of the existing cash transfer projects in the state. The purpose of the exercise was to complement the coverage of cash-based transfers to eligible people most in need and to strengthen government stakeholders’ capacity to reduce its citizen vulnerability while also building their resilience to future shocks.

The WFP team, alongside UNICEF colleagues in the project, consulted with the state’s ministries, departments and agencies in a workshop approach to understand the current and planned Social Protection or Safety Nets projects in the state and also the capacity training plans in the state in all agencies with roles to play in projects related to SDGs. The WFP team also developed a tool to assess the level of capabilities that exist within the identified agencies to carry out cash based transfer interventions effectively in the state. The WFP team reviewed the implementation of the joint UN-SDG project especially as it relates to expanding the coverage of social protection to the health sector.

The team, led by Akeem Ajibola, WFP Programme Policy Officer, working with Ms. Bintu Mustapha, a WFP cash based transfer (CBT) expert, made some important recommendations for immediate and long-term sustainable reform of the Sokoto State cash transfer programmes. These are: (i) to put in place systems to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of unified interventions; and, (ii) to provide instruments, tools and enabling capacity for the management of Beneficiary Information System (BIS) by key stakeholders.

The result of the assessment informed key actions, which the UN Joint Project is prioritizing to strengthen the capacity of the state’s agencies for effective cash-based transfers moving forward.

Defend Media Workers, Ensure Information Remains A Public Good – UN Urges



As the world marked the World Press Freedom Day, the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Ms. Audrey Azoulay, called on everyone to renew their commitment to the fundamental right to freedom of expression, to defend media workers, and to join hands in ensuring that information remains a public good.

In the statement presented by the Director of the UNESCO Regional Office for West-Sahel Africa, and OIC UNESCO Regional Office, Abuja, Mr. Dimitri Sanga, at the webinar organized by UNESCO Abuja in collaboration with the United States of America Embassy in Abuja and United Nations Information Center (UNIC) Nigeria, the Director General noted that the theme of this year's World Press Freedom Day, "Information as a Public Good", underlined the indisputable importance of verified and reliable information.

"It calls attention to the essential role of free and professional journalists in producing and disseminating this information, by tackling misinformation and other harmful content." She added.

The webinar held on May 4 had in attendance over two hundred and fifty person comprising of journalists, media personnel, youths and academics.

The United States Ambassador to Nigeria Mary Beth Leonard, said the cooperation between the United States and the United Nations "is critical for our common work." She pointed out that the World Press Freedom Day served as a reminder to the government that access to information serves the interest of all and that United States would continue to advocate for journalists' ability to work without fear.

She called for law enforcement and accountability against those who commit violence and other abuses against journalist.

The event had two renowned speakers, Barry Sullivan from Cooney & Conway Chair in Advocacy and professor of law at Loyola University Chicago and Dr. Abiodun Adeniyi Professor of Communication, Baze University, Abuja.

Prof. Sullivan highlighted issues around secrecy in government and the implications for journalistic practice; noting that "we must not confuse the role of the media with that of the govern-

ment. "Media are not the substitute for or an adjunct of government. The press is serve the governed and not the Governors." He said.

Dr. Adeniyi said focus on information as a public good would be through the prism of strengthening institutions for improved information dissemination and thus the onus lies on authorities, whether governmental, or non-governmental, or public or private.

Commissioner of Police Frank Mba called for mutual support by the media and law enforcement agencies. "Media and Police share similar DNA in terms of risks. As police officers, just like journalists and health workers, we were also hit by the CCOVID-19 pandemic." He said.

The President of the Nigerian Union of Journalist, Chris Isiguzo also assured journalist and the organizers of the unions' willingness to work together in ensuring that safety of journalist in Nigeria is achieved.

FG, UN Train Legal Drafters On Social Protection

Towards addressing the challenges of limited legal and effective coverage of social protection for Nigerian residents, the government of Nigeria with the support of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) under the Joint SDG Funds, has organised a retreat for legal drafters, with a view to drafting the National Social Protection Bill.

The retreat which held 17 - 19 May 2021, aimed to train them on the relevant international and regional instruments on social protection; ensure familiarisation with the revised national social protection policy and the legal mapping, among others.

The Special Adviser to the President on Social Investments, Mrs Maryam Uwais (MFR), said Nigeria must adopt a digital-first (where feasible) approach in the delivery of social benefits, "so we need to adopt a holistic Nigerian collaborative and coordinated policy agenda for social protection and investment, as well as effective and harmonized governance, taking into consideration the peculiar challenges of facilitating compliance from the States and LGAs."

WIPO Berths in Nigeria, Supports Innovation and Creativity

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has opened an office in Nigeria. This is one of seven such representations outside the Organization's Geneva headquarters; and also one of only two WIPO Offices in Africa – the only one in sub-Saharan Africa - and opened in 2020.

Occupying an office space within the United Nations House in Abuja, the WIPO Nigeria Office (WNO), as an external presence of WIPO, is committed to working closely with the government as well as stakeholders in Nigeria, towards supporting innovation and creativity through awareness raising, training and capacity building in the field of intellectual property (IP), as well as across WIPO's global services in Nigeria.

As part of the efforts to strengthen Nigeria's creative and innovation sectors, the WNO's programs and activities are aimed at strengthening the provision and/or knowledge of WIPO Global IP Services and treaties in Nigeria; Promoting cooperation between WIPO and the Federal Republic of Nigeria; Promoting and participating in capacity building activities in the field of IP within Nigeria; and supporting the development and implementation of IP frameworks to promote innovation and creativity amongst others.

Intellectual property (IP) broadly refers to creations of the mind and the rights that protect them. Copyright, for instance, protects literary, musical, dramatic and artistic works thereby playing a major role in incentivizing and encouraging creativity among authors, entertainers, broadcasters, performers and other content creators. Copyright is key to the growth of the creative industries which contribute trillions of Naira to the country's GDP while yet being one of its largest employers of labour. It is natural that a nation with such a powerful creative industries sector would attach importance to IP. Nigeria is home to Nollywood, the second largest film industry in the world in terms of output. Nigeria's music, literature and art sectors are also strong and show great potential for future growth. Other IP rights include patents, which offer exclusive time-bound protection (usually 20 years) to inventors for the commercialization of products and/or processes which are new, the product of intellec-

tual activity and which are capable of industrial application. This incentive encourages innovative activity. Trademarks protect the integrity of the marketplace by ensuring protection for the logos, marks, signs, symbols etc., that are used to distinguish goods and services in the marketplace. Other areas of IP include geographical indications, which offers protection to products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin (potential examples in Nigeria could include Nsukka Pepper, Ogbomoshos Mangoes, or even Ijebu Garri), industrial designs – which constitute the ornamental aspect of an article, trade secrets which are IP rights on confidential information that may be sold or licensed, amongst other IP examples.

As the specialized agency of the United Nations charged with the global administration and promotion of intellectual property, WIPO strives for a world where innovation and creativity from anywhere is supported by intellectual property for the good of everyone. WIPO was established in 1967 and currently has 193 Member States. Nigeria joined in 1995. The WNO also supports the Nigerian Government's stated goal of a further diversification of its economy by encompassing knowledge-based resources which are supported by innovation, culture and creativity.

Since the commencement of its operations in January 2020, the WNO has been welcomed warmly by the United Nations family in Nigeria as well as public and private stakeholders in the field of intellectual property. It has maintained close engagement with the Nigerian Government and IP Stakeholders towards expanding the knowledge, accessibility, awareness and strategic use of IP for economic, social and cultural development in Nigeria.



Intellectual Property, Critical For Enabling Economic Growth – VP Osinbajo

The Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, H.E. Prof. Yemi Osinbajo (SAN), has emphasized the role of SMEs in driving economic recovery in Nigeria through markets and intellectual property.

Represented by the Hon. Minister for Industry, Trade and Investment, Otunba Adeniyi Adebayo, at the high-level panel hosted by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Nigeria Office, to commemorate the World IP Day, the Vice President noted that MSMEs in Nigeria account for 48% of the country's GDP, constitute about 96% of registered businesses and employ about 84% of the labor force.

He noted that IP was critical for harnessing talent, developing technical know-how, specialization in the production and export of modern technologies as well as the overall growth of the economy.

Speaking on the theme, "Innovation, IP and SMEs: Opportunities and Challenges for SMEs in Driving Nigeria's Economic Recovery", Prof. Osinbajo pointed out to the need for a strong IP system to promote FDI, innovation, research and development and technology transfer. He stressed the commitment of the government towards comprehensive reforms to strengthen IP rights in Nigeria in areas of registration, protection, enhancement and enforcement, which were strategic to the country's economic growth and development goals.

Celebrated on April 26 each year, the World IP Day provides an important opportunity to highlight the role that IP plays in promoting innovation and creativity in society. This afforded

an important opportunity to celebrate SMEs while placing the spotlight on the central role that IP plays in supporting resilient SMEs which generate products and services towards supporting

economic growth. SMEs are the backbone of the global economy: they make up around 90 percent of the world's businesses, employ about 50 percent of the global workforce, and generate up to 40 percent of national income in many emerging economies.

Other speakers on the panel were, Mr. Hasan Kleib, Deputy Director General, WIPO, Ms. Mary Beth Leonard, United States Ambassador to Nigeria, Ms. Ndidi Nwuneli, MFR, Managing Partner Sahel Consulting, Dr. Umaru Radda, Director General SMEDAN, and Ms. Victoria Akai, Director General Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

As part of the World IP Day celebrations, the WNO also organized, on May 19, 2021, an IP Masterclass and training session for businesses and SMEs "IP for Business". This was organized in collaboration with the Nigerian Bar Association Section on Business Law, the International Trademark Association (INTA) and the United States Mission, Nigeria.



Minister for Industry, Trade and Investment, Otunba Adeniyi Adebayo

Caught in crisis: Voices from north-east Nigeria



Space crunch

Overcrowding in camps is increasingly becoming an issue due to large groups of people fleeing areas recently attacked by NSAGs.

“Overcrowding takes away the dignity of displaced people who have been forced to flee their homes,” says Doreen Chinwem Aninyei, a Protection Associate from UNHCR, the UN refugee agency.

“Women, girls and boys are sometimes forced to resort to negative coping mechanisms such as begging or survival sex in an environment with

limited livelihood opportunities,” she continues.

But more worrying to UNHCR is the lack of space, which prevents physical distancing and increases the risk of the spread of communicable diseases such as COVID-19, measles and cholera. It also increases the risk of fire hazards in camps due to limited distance between cooking points.

“We receive regular reports of disputes at water points and inadequate toilets and bathrooms for the number of people living in the camps,” adds Doreen.

A voice for people with disabilities

Living conditions in IDP camps are even more challenging for people with disabilities. Halima, a 27-year-old mother of six, suffers from a disability that left her unable to walk. She sits on what looks like a bicycle but is actually a wheelchair — her only means of getting around. Her 10-year-old daughter, Falmata, accompanied her for this interview.

Halima explains: “When help is being distributed in the camp, I always get pushed away since I am physically unable to stand in a queue. People with disabilities face even more challenges, as I do. We can’t fight for our provisions. I have heard about women with disabilities being sexually assaulted but thankfully have not lived this experience myself.”

Years ago, Halima and her family fled Marte, a village near Lake Chad, at night. They have been living in this camp for several years now.

An estimated 27 per cent of the displaced population are disabled. Halima formed a group with others like her in the camp, as she feels that people with disabilities suffer more than others, especially because they are unable to access special services that cater to their needs.

Violence against women

Hajiya Mariam, a 48-year-old mother of 12, was displaced in 2015 from Baga, a fishing community in Borno close to Lake Chad. She said the hardships women face in the camps is exacerbated by domestic violence related to hunger and drug abuse.

“Some men beat their wives because of hunger,” Hajiya explains. “We have seen a situation where a man beat his wife because he could not provide for her basic needs like food and clothing. There are also times when a man in the camp becomes addicted to drugs and alcohol and unleashes violence against his wife.”

Hajiya lost her husband, who was captured and killed by NSAGs while trying to flee to Monguno, a transit village en route to Maiduguri. Hajiya now raises her children alone.

Gender-based violence (GBV) affecting women and girls is one of the most serious protection issues that aid workers are dealing with in the camps.

Camp-life reality

If the eyes are the windows to the soul, then those of Yazari Modu have much to tell. She is one of several thousand people living in overcrowded camps across Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states — the areas most affected by the crisis in north-east Nigeria.

“We stay in a classroom where nine families are cramped in a tiny space. There are some families of four children living in the classroom and others with six children,” said Yazari, a 66-year-old mother of 12.

Yazari resides in one of the most congested camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Borno State, the epicentre of the conflict. Her story is not unique; it represents the stark reality for many IDPs caught in crisis.

Due to the rapidly deteriorating security situation in north-east Nigeria, more families are fleeing their homes to survive. Often, they come to these camps to seek refuge, but find that living in this environment presents its own set of challenges. Bedrooms become classrooms

Yazari said: “There is no privacy here. Every morning we get dressed and leave the classroom — where we stay and sleep — to allow children to attend their classes. We spend the day under the trees, regardless of the weather, even when it rains.”

The mother of 12 fled her hometown in Bama, a local government area (LGA), after it was attacked in 2015 by non-State armed groups (NSAGs). She was abducted and sentenced to die by fire at the hands of non-State actors whose reign of terror has displaced millions of people.

In every village that non-State actors attack and destroy, they forcibly recruit men and boys to join their cause, and they abduct women and girls from the community.

The non-State actors captured Yazari and threatened her until she told them where her husband was. They also demanded to know the whereabouts of the other men in her village.

Fortunately, one of Yazari’s neighbours, a 90-year-old Muslim man, pleaded with the captors to let her go. Thanks to his heroism, Yazari later escaped with her children. They travelled for four days across mountainous and rough terrain until they reached Maiduguri, where they currently live in an IDP camp.

Yazari left behind a big family compound with a house in which each person had their own room, and a backyard farm where chickens roamed free. But that life is now a distant memory. Today, she and her family struggle to survive in an overcrowded environment with no privacy and little to no access to essential services.

FG, UN Holds Dialogue On Food Systems With Rural Stakeholders



Rural stakeholders at Adogo, Kogi State during a brain storming session on how to improve and achieve sustainable food systems

The Federal Government in collaboration with the United Nations (UN) International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has organised Rural Community Food Systems Dialogue in eight states across Nigeria.

The dialogue is aimed at identifying practices and policies that would enhance food availability and affordability for all in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) vision 2030.

The Rural Community Food Systems Dialogue which held simultaneously on May 18, 2021 at rural communities in Ogun, Kogi, Taraba, Anambra, Ondo, Niger, Abia and Bayelsa States was facilitated by IFAD Value Chain Development Programme (IFAD-VCDP) and IFAD Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprises in the Niger Delta (LIFE-ND) project. The dialogue had in attendance, stakeholders such as rural farmers, food processors, artisans, business women and men; market women, youths, health workers, traditional and religious leaders.

Declaring the dialogue opened at Adogo Community, Kogi State, the National Programme Coordinator, IFAD-VCDP, Alhaji Garba Bala, said the rural stakeholders dialogue is being done at the instance of the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres who is convening a world Food Summit in New York in September.

Bala stated that as part of preparatory process to this world food summit that would be devoted to improving food production, improved nutrition, reduce poverty and hunger among others, each country that is a member of United Nations is expected to hold National Food Systems Summit.

According to him "Nigeria had held its national and regional food dialogue in February and April respectively; this third stage is about capturing specifically the rural community stakeholders who are more often than not neglected whereas they are majorly the people involved in agriculture".

A participant, Mr Isa Yakubu, the Secretary of All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) in Ajaokuta, Kogi State called on the Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON) and NAFDAC to ensure that standard and quality farm inputs such as chemicals and seeds are sold to farmers.

According to Yakubu, most of the pesticides, herbicides and seeds the farmers were buying are substandard products which are having negative effects on their farm produce.

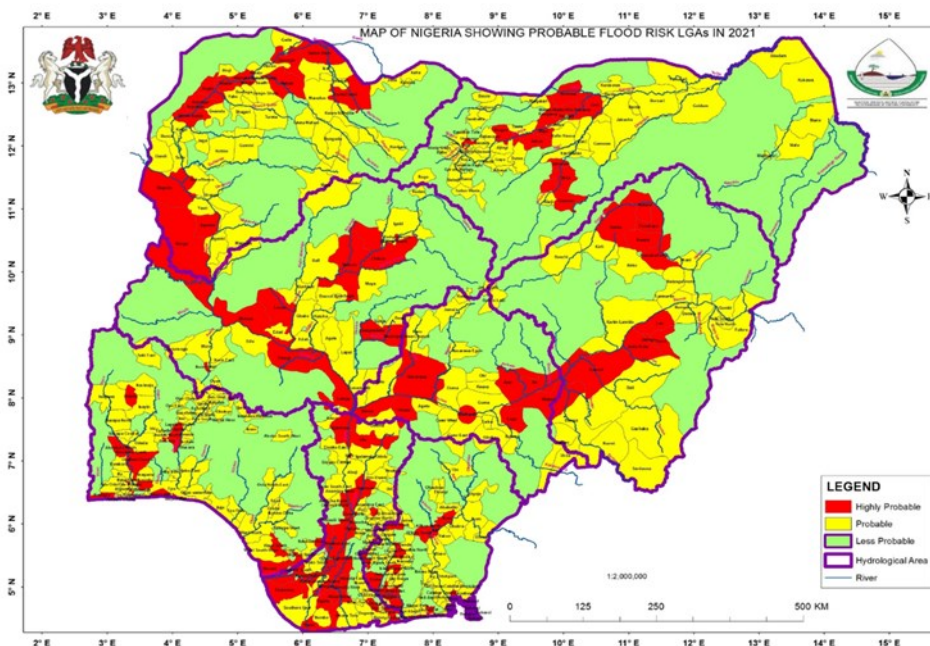
Another participant, a youth leader and farmer in Sabagrei Community in Bayelsa State, Mr Ugo Funebi, urged the federal government to establish public-private managed food banks, storage facilities to store harvested surplus agricultural produce harvested in the community.

Also commenting on the dialogue, the traditional ruler of Kobape Community in Ogun State, Oba Johnson Alani lauded the government and the UN for deeming it fit to hear from the rural dwellers on ways to enhance food production saying that it was no doubt a good move towards achieving food security and eradicating poverty and hunger across the globe.



**UNITED NATIONS
FOOD SYSTEMS
SUMMIT 2021**

Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency Releases Annual Flood Outlook For 2021: Predicts Floods In 27 States



Bayelsa, Benue, Cross-River, Delta, Ebonyi, Edo, Gombe, Imo, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Nasarawa, Niger, Ogun, Oyo, Rivers, Sokoto, Taraba and Zamfara.

Coastal flooding as a result of rise in sea level and tidal surge have also been predicted for some coastal states such as Bayelsa, Delta and Lagos. Flash and Urban floods have also been predicted in some urban cities as a result of poor drainage systems and low-lying attributes. These cities include Birnin–Kebbi, Sokoto, Kaduna, Gombe, Yola, Makurdi, Abuja, Lafia, Asaba, Port Harcourt, Yenagoa, Lagos, Ibadan, Abeokuta, Benin City, Oshogbo, Ado-Ekiti, Abakaliki, Awka, Nsukka, Calabar, Owerri, Kano, and other major cities. The flood scenarios as presented in the 2021 AFO are derived from the application of three reliable models.

On 6 May 2021, the Honourable Minister of Water Resources Engr. Suleiman H. Adamu unveiled the 2021 Annual Flood Outlook (AFO) publication by the Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA). The unveiling took place at a high-level event in Abuja attended by Parliamentarians, representatives of Ministers and State Governors, and Directors General of several Agencies including the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet), National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), National Water Resources Institute (NWRI), and the National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA). Other participants included, Vice Chancellors of Universities, and representatives from Agencies of the United Nations including the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the UNESCO Regional Center for Integrated River Basin Management.

The Annual Flood Outlook (AFO) has been published by the Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA) since 2013 and it is aimed at sensitizing the general public and those living in the coastal and riverine areas, including cities and communities along the transboundary Rivers Niger and Benue on the risk of flooding.

The 2021 AFO flood predictions highlighted highly probable flood risk areas in parts of 121 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in 27 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Moderately probable flood risk areas were detected in parts of 302 LGAs in all the 36 States of the Federation including the FCT. In addition, parts of 351 LGAs fell within the low probable flood risks areas.

The 27 states which constitute the highly probable flood risk areas include Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Anambra, Bauchi,

These include the Hydrologic Engineering Centre Modelling System (HEC-HMS), the Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) and the Hydrologiska Byråns Vattenbalansavdelning (HBV) Model. These models utilize meteorological data products from global data centres, hydrological and hydrogeological data, topographical and soil water balance indices, as well as Digital Elevation Model (DEM). According to NIHSA, the 2020 AFO predicted flood in 363 LGAs. Out of this number, flooding was recorded in 145 LGAs predicted and in 77 LGAs which were not predicted. The 2020 flood claimed 69 lives, displaced 865,829 people, damaged 979,054 farmlands, and affected 2,353,647 people in the 36 states and the FCT.

All stakeholders are to take note of the flood early warnings and information and support mitigation measures as appropriate. Information on the extent and severity of the expected flooding have been detailed in the 2021 AFO publication which is accessible from the NIHSA website <http://nihsa.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021-AFO.pdf>.



The Honourable Minister of Water Resources Engr. Suleiman H. Adamu FNSE, FAEng (centre), Permanent Secretary Federal Ministry of Water Resources Mrs. Didi Esther Waslon-Jack mni (immediate left), Director General Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency Engr. Clement Onyeaso Nze (immediate right), and other dignitaries unveiling the 2021 AFO.

FCT Minister Pledges Support For Polio Transition Plan To Sustain Legacy



With the imminent accelerated Polio Programme ramp down in Nigeria, the World Health Organization's (WHO's) Country Representative (WR) Dr Walter Kazadi Mulombo has taken his advocacy train on the implementation of the Polio Transition Plan to Mallam Muhammed Musa Bello, the Honourable Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

The meeting held on 11 April 2021 at the Minister's Conference Room comes on the heels of the accelerated polio ramp down plan which means that with polio-free status, WHO will no longer receive funding for the polio programme from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) starting January 2022.

In his opening remarks during the meeting, Dr Mulombo appreciated the Minister for, "all your efforts at improving the health indicators in FCT. Through the Polio infrastructure we have been providing support in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public health programmes, aimed at preventing, promoting and protecting the health of the Nigerian population in line with the goals and objectives of the National Health Plan.

Through this structure, we were able to achieve Polio eradication and sustain certification standard surveillance in the Territory since the last reported WPV case in 2013 in FCT."

Unfortunately, with the success comes the grim reality of dwindling resources and the fact that from January 2022, the GPEI partnership has indicated that it will be withdrawing funding support to Nigeria in order to squarely concentrate resources on eradication efforts in the two last endemic countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The WR recalled that Nigeria was removed from the list of three remaining wild polio virus (WPV) endemic countries globally in August 2020. Despite the certification, the work on polio eradication continues in order to forestall the risks of importation until global certification is attained. Furthermore, circulating vaccine derived polio virus (cVDPV2) outbreaks continue to remain a major risk to the programme due to sub optimal population immunity.

With this realization, the WR solicited the support of the FCT Minister to ensure that the skilled and experienced manpower and assets are absorbed by government for continuity and support other public health interventions.

Specifically, the WR mentioned that these resources can be utilized to strengthen routine immunization, consolidate investment in disease surveillance and support revitalisation of primary

healthcare services which align with the government's health agenda.

Responding to the WR's prayer, the FCT Minister said, "we will provide the needed support so that the success of the polio programme and the capacity built over the years do not go down the drain".

He mentioned that, Nigeria can not be complacent as no "country is free of polio except eradication is achieved everywhere". He also noted the significance of transferring polio assets to address other public health concerns as tabled by the WR.

According to him, "We will leverage on the rich pool of trained staff to boost the PHC workforce, working on internal assessment for appropriate data to see how many of the Polio workforce the FCT can absorb."

Furthermore, the Minister asked WHO to consider working hard on engaging private sector stakeholders like the CACOVID in COVID-19 response including vaccination. He promised that the FCT can support hosting of private sector donors as may be required.

During the meeting, WHO Africa Regional Director, General Management Cluster, Mr Mahen Sandrasagren, and Dr Pascal Mkanda the Polio Eradication Programme Coordinator who participated virtually, acknowledged the great achievements of the polio eradication programme in Nigeria but rued that funding for the programme will be withdrawn at the end of 2021. With this scenario, the government of Nigeria will have to take over funding of polio functions or mobilize resources so that transition is seamless and to avoid rolling back the success achieved with polio eradication. Senior Management officers from the FCT and WHO attended the meeting

Support for polio eradication to the Government of Nigeria through WHO, is made possible by funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Department for International Development, European Union, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, Global Affairs Canada, Government of Germany, through KfW Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Korea Foundation for International Healthcare, Rotary International, United States Agency for International Development, United States Centre for Disease Control and Prevention and World Bank.

UN Supports Nigeria To Respond To Child Labour Emergency



As Nigeria grapples with child labour emergency, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has provided various forms of assistance aimed at helping her accelerate efforts towards eradicating child labour. Consequently, Nigeria has set the wheels in motion for a remarkable International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour (IYECL) 2021 with the validation of the second cycle of its National Policy on the Elimination of Child Labour and the launch of the National Action Plan (NAP) for the elimination of child labour (2021-2025) in April 2021.

The UN has declared 2021 as the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour. The International Year will provide an opportunity to address the challenges posed by COVID-19 and to accelerate progress towards the goal set by SDG Target 8.7 to end child labour in all its forms by 2025.

With fifteen (15) million under-14 children engaged in economic activities and about half this population being exploited as workers in hazardous situations (FML&E 2020, 18), Nigeria's status as a leader in the coordinated efforts to eliminate child labour from supply chains in Africa by 2025 is boosted by progress reports on Action Pledges.

The ILO tripartite partners and other Government Ministries, in April 2021, made and presented their solemn declarations of intent to contribute to the eradication of child labour by 2025. Amongst stakeholders that presented their declarations of intent were Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment (FML&E), Federal Ministry of Mines and Steel Development (FMMSD), Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA), Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) of Nigeria besides other stakeholders.

Partnering with the International Labour Organization (ILO) through the ACCEL Africa Project funded by the Dutch Government, Nigeria has set up systems to communicate the collective harm caused by child labour through - a National Social and Behavioural Change and Communication (SBCC) Strategy; and a Child Labour/Forced Labour Monitoring and Remediation System to sanitize supply chains and society in general.

Nigeria's Action Pledges presented by its Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, reflects efforts to collaborate with the ILO in conducting a National Child and Forced Labour Survey, as

well as empower one (1) million vulnerable households/Child Labour victims by strengthening the Conditional Cash-Transfer Programmes.

To further reduce child labour in supply chains (Granite Quarry, Rice Farming, Artisanal Gold Mining and Cocoa Farming), Nigeria is operating a Conditional Cash-Transfer scheme with 2.5 million households (totaling 10 million individuals) already beneficiaries of this Social Investment Programme (SIP) supported by the World Bank.

Beyond tackling poverty, which is a major cause of child labour, the country plans to use advocacy, research and communication to provide enlightenment on the dangers of the scourge to physical, psychological and collective development.

Expanding the scope of this urgent response to child labour in Nigeria, are the Action Pledges by NECA, NLC and TUC coalition. NECA's position as one of the umbrella organizations of employers in Nigeria's organized private sector makes it a critical responder to the child labour situation. On its part, the association is engaging 100 employers to implement standards that will eradicate child labour in their organizations and supply chains this year.

NECA is also developing a code of conduct on child labour for its members while guiding them on implementing apprenticeships and programmes for children between 15 and 17 years in non-hazardous sectors as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In addition, the organisation has pledged to conduct a Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) survey of employers on the elimination of child labour and train facilitators to close identified gaps.

On their part, workers' organizations, NLC and TUC, would develop a training toolkit on Fundamental Principles & Rights at Work (FPRW), and would replicate set standards at State levels especially in Artisanal Gold Mining in Niger State and Cocoa farming, in Ondo State.

The partners expect the action to prevent underage children from working in gold mines and cocoa plantations, promote social protection and social dialogue in both sectors for children within the working age (15-17), and establish a young workers' wing of trade unions for workers aged 15-17 years.

Speaking Pictures of Migration



The media plays an influential role in shaping public opinion. It should therefore be the source to right information and balanced reportage reflecting the complex realities of societies. The media can be a veritable tool for addressing developmental issues, including the myths and misconceptions about migration.

Migration, both regular and irregular, remains a subject of interest to journalists as the incidence of migration continues to increase globally. However, a dimension of reportage yet to be fully explored is the use of ethical visual storytelling in dispelling the myths about migrants and returnees to ensure their integration in their communities of origin and destination. To this end, UNESCO Regional Office Abuja together with its implementing partners held a photo exhibition.

This exhibition is the outcome of the UNESCO Regional Office Abuja training workshop through its implementing partner Arts for Humanity on ethical photojournalism held in Benin City, Edo State of Nigeria in April 2021. The exhibition presents the creativity and skills of the photojournalists and contributes to the discourse on migration through images. The images are documented stories on migration presented by the participants.

Aderonke Alade, like the other artists of the event, stood next to her collection of images and shared detailed description to the

visitors on what she saw and thought when she pressed the shutter; "I knew that migration has different faces but the experience while taking the images for this exhibition made it a reality as I was able to feel the diverse faces of what migration entails".

The three-day event, which held in the serene city of Abuja, Nigeria saw a continuous influx of visitors with some using their smartphones to take their own exhibition selfies. It was an event of education and informal discussion for stakeholders and partners on migration coming together to enjoy the images and discuss on ways of addressing the issues of irregular Migration.

Ozavogu Abdul, a guest at the exhibition said, "The exhibition was a fantastic look into Migration. I think the different perspectives of the artists help shed more light into the reality of migration such as the causes, the victory and losses, most importantly that migration aren't always a one-sided story".

This activity is part of an ongoing project funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) through the 'Fondo Africa' of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation (MAECI). The project aims at empowering young men and women to make informed decisions on migration issues through better access to quality information (SGD16.10). It is hoped that these images will contribute to the needed paradigm shift in the narrative about migration stories in Nigeria.

Consider The Plight Of Women And Girls Affected By Obstetric Fistula – Kallon

Pursuant to the UN General Assembly resolution that declared May 23rd the International Day to End Obstetric Fistula, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mr. Edward Kallon, has called on all Nigerians and stakeholders around the world to consider the plight of women and girls affected by obstetric fistula.

He said this in a statement issued on 23 May 2021, to commemorate the International Day to End Obstetric Fistula.

"Today is the day to reaffirm our commitment to ending this dreadful condition and to redouble our efforts." Mr Kallon said, "We need to strengthen health systems and maternal medical care, promote women's rights, empower women and girls with autonomy in their decision-making, increase availability and affordability of fistula treatment, and increase fund allocation, particularly for obstetric fistula prevention, treatment and reintegration services."

The Resident Coordinator disclosed that in Nigeria, an estimated 150,000 women and girls were afflicted by this debilitating condition, while 13,000 new cases were added annually.

However, the good news, according to Mr. Kallon, is that obstetric fistula is both preventable and treatable in nearly all cases. Patients with uncomplicated fistula can undergo a simple surgery that costs \$600 per patient. The UNFPA has ably led the global campaign to End Fistula, helping to conduct 121,000 surgeries in 55 countries since 2003, transforming the lives of so many women and girls.

The Resident Coordinator, therefore, urged everyone to provide hope, healing and dignity for all women and girls with Obstetric Fistula condition.



UN, FG Join National Dialogue on Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission of HIV

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC joined the Honourable Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire, the Director-General of the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA), Dr Gambo Aliyu and other high ranking representatives of Government, various United Nations agencies and the NGO community for the National Dialogue on the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV in Nigeria.

The dialogue provides, among others, a unique opportunity to recall and further reflect on the 2018 survey of HIV/AIDS in prison conducted by NACA, the Nigeria Correctional Service and the Federal Ministry of Health with the joint support of UNODC, UNAIDS, USAID. The findings showed that the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among persons in custodial centres was 2.8% about twice as high as among the general population. The study further showed that HIV prevalence among the approximately 1000 women in correctional facilities with 6.9% was dramatically higher than that among male inmates (2.7%).

Moreover, in 2018 the National Bureau of Statistics with the support of UNODC conducted the first every comprehensive national drug use survey in Nigeria. According to this study, there are approximately 3.4 million women who used drugs at least once in 2017/2018 and approximately 18,000 female injecting

drug users. The report also found that women were more likely to inject daily and were more likely to share needles and syringes.

With a relatively young mean age of initiation of drug use (e.g. heroin use was 22 years), a high number of sexual partners, and regular unprotected sexual intercourse, women who inject drugs are highly vulnerable to HIV infections and transmission, including mother to child transmission. Moreover, a significant proportion of female sex workers use or inject drugs, thereby increasing their risk of HIV infection and transmission.

Special attention should be given to pregnant women and mothers in custodial centres and other closed settings as well as those who inject drugs in line with the resolutions of the 26th Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and that of the 61st session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, most prominently resolution 61/4 on "Promoting measures for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, hepatitis B and C and syphilis among women who use drugs".

In order to address this challenge, UNODC developed respective training materials for prison services and organized jointly with the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) training on the Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission in custodial centres.

UN Crime Commission Highlights Nigeria's Efforts in Bringing Terrorists to Justice

Participants at the 30th session of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) in Vienna attended a virtual side event focused on the successes and challenges in mounting an effective criminal justice response to terrorism in North-East Nigeria and heard firsthand from some of the Nigerian officials leading the fight to bring members of Boko Haram to justice. The event was funded by the European Union Delegation to Nigeria.

Since 2009, Nigeria has confronted a serious terrorist threat from Boko Haram, which has since split into two main factions Jama'atu Ahli is-Sunnah lid-Da'wati wal-Jihād (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad, commonly known as JAS) and Islamic State in West African Province (ISWAP).

These groups have killed and destroyed thousands of lives, communities and livelihoods and displaced 2.5 million people across the Lake Chad region, with over 1.8 million people displaced in Nigeria alone. Since 2013, the European Union (EU), UNODC and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) have been working with the Nigerian government through an intensive capacity-building program aimed at strengthening criminal justice responses to terrorism with respect for human rights and the rule of law.

The representative of the Office of the National Security Adviser's Counter-Terrorism Centre, opened the panel discussion with a comprehensive summary of the achievements of the Nigerian criminal justice system's response to terrorism, notwithstanding the significant challenges posed by operating in a conflict zone, and also highlighted some of the innovative measures adopted by the government to promote the disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and resettlement (DDRR) of former Boko Haram fighters.

He noted, "it is important to state that these achievements were possible with the support of the EU-Nigeria-UNODC-CTED Partnership Project and the efforts and cooperation of the various Nigerian stakeholders within government and non-governmental organizations."

The lead judge of the Federal High Court's dedicated terrorism team, explained how the Federal High Court had responded

to the daunting challenge of hearing 1,670 separate terrorism cases so far and described some of the difficult logistical hurdles that had had to be overcome including ensuring court security, reaching just and accurate determinations with a very limited physical and forensic evidence, and an operational shortage of specialist judges. Justice Nyako added that an upsurge in terrorist violence and then the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 had caused considerable disruption, but the Court had responded flexibly, including by exploring the possibility of hearing some future trials remotely.

UN To Cover 5,000 Vulnerable Individuals Health Insurance Cost In Sokoto State

Within the framework of the Joint SDG fund, UNICEF has committed to providing the contributory cost for the health insurance coverage for 5,000 vulnerable individuals, including pregnant women, under-five children, and persons with disability, to help reduce financial barriers and expand health insurance coverage in the State.

With support from the National Social Safety Net Coordination office (NASSCO), UNICEF began the process with a 4-day capacity building training on identification, sensitization & enumeration of beneficiaries in the Insurance Scheme.

The training which took place in Sokoto State from March 8 -12, 2021, was aimed at building the capacity for persons enrolling beneficiaries and using the Kobotool app to collect household information in line with the vision of the Federal Government's National Social Safety Net Coordination office. The enumerators were selected from all 23 LGAs, including enumerators from the Zakat Commission, SO-CHEMA, and the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning.

In her opening remarks, the Special Adviser to the State Governor, SO-CHEMA, Dr Amamatu Yusuf, highlighted that introducing a more effective method of accessing health care service through health insurance and the contributory scheme would significantly reduce the statistics of mobility and mortality resulting from access health care. She thanked UNICEF for the intervention and great partnership.

Sokoto State has an estimated population of 5.3 million people, with about 4.5 million lacking access to health insurance.

PHOTO NEWS



Captions, from left to right in a clockwise direction

1. Wife of Lagos State Governor, HE (Dr.) Claudiana Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu (5th from left); UNFPA Country Representative, Ms. Ulla Mueller (7th from left); and other dignitaries at the launch of Sexual And Gender Based Violence Virtual Response & Referral System, under the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to end gender-based violence and harmful practices against women and girls in Nigeria.
2. L-R: Director of Social Development, Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Mr. Omotayo Adeyemi; Special Adviser to the President on Social Investments, Mrs Maryam Uwais (MFR); and Attorney General of Oyo State, Prof Oyelowo Oyewo (SAN), at the retreat for legal drafters, with a view to drafting the National Social Protection Bill held 17 - 19 May 2021, in Lagos.
3. Resident Coordinator Edward Kallon, on behalf of the United Nations Nigeria, extends condolences to the family of Late Hajiya Aisha Alhassan, former Minister of Women Affairs, the government and people of Nigeria.

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