It was a glorious seven-day period for Nigeria at the UN Headquarters in New York as Nigeria’s Prof Tijjani Muhammad-Bande took over the reins of leadership of the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on the 17th September while the President of Nigeria, H.E. Muhammadu Buhari, on 24th September, took his turn to address world leaders at the Assembly, wherein also seated on the Dias, Nigeria’s Amina Muhammed, the UN Deputy Secretary General.

Addressing the world leaders at UNGA, President Buhari commended the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, “for his tremendous energy, his genuine international outlook exhibited by his leadership of the United Nations”. He assured that Nigeria would live to expectations in its leadership the UN General Assembly.

The Nigerian President called for strong action against xenophobia, racism, and abject poverty and also expressed concern about climate change which forced thousands to protest across the world, as well as terrorism and other forms of threat to life.

“Peace and security, poverty eradication, zero hunger, quality education, climate action and inclusion will constitute a major priority of my presidency”, said Prof Muhammad-Bande.

Prof Muhammad-Bande committed “to promoting partnerships that are needed from all stakeholders to achieve our objectives, and ultimately ensure that we do our best to ensure peace and prosperity, particularly, for the most vulnerable”.

“The promotion of human rights and the empowerment of women and youth deserve special attention, and I will be devoted to the promotion...continue on page 2
...of gender parity throughout the whole UN system, starting from my own Office”, said the President of the UN General Assembly.

Noting that the 75th anniversary of the UN’s founding would be commemorated during his tenure, he called it “a unique opportunity for us to reduce the trust deficit between nations”.

To “achieve the visions of our founding fathers, we must ensure that indifference and cynicism does not creep into our Organization”, he asserted, saying that the 193-nation Assembly “must play its role in bridging the gaps and promoting collective action”.

In his remarks, Secretary-General António Guterres congratulated Mr. Muhammad-Bande and noted some of the “many important and admirable qualifications” he brings to the office.

He cited the president-elect’s tenure as Nigeria’s UN Ambassador; his expertise in political science and public administration; and the “invaluable insights” he has into Africa’s challenges and world affairs in general, particularly regarding the Organization’s peace and security work, sustainable development and human rights.

First Meeting of the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly. Photo: United Nations

FG, UN Launch iSDG Nigeria Model ...continued from page 1

...of UNDP Nigeria, Mr Muhamed Yahya represented by Mr Ojijo Odiambio; Chairman of Nigerian Governors’ Forum, Dr Kayode Fayemi; Honourable Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Mrs Zainab Ahmed; Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo State; Governor Dapo Abiodun of Ogun State; President Muhammadu Buhari; Governor Babajide Sanwoolu of Lagos, among others.

In her remarks, Honourable Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning explained that the iSDG Model offered value proposition by enhancing the coherence of various policy packages, by minimizing trade-offs between measures and maximizing synergies between measures. “I will like to reaffirm our commitment to judiciously utilise this planning tool, along with other existing tools, as we aim to revert to our well-known tradition of long-term National Development Planning. We will build the capacity of Ministry in this regard and I encourage the state governments to consider domesticating the iSDG Model as an alternative planning tool.” She acknowledged.

Speaking, Mrs Adefulire, noted that as a country, “we have integrated the main areas of concern to the SDGs in our Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017-2020 and the government has provided significant amount of resources within our means to support the implementation of various programmes and projects.”

Nigeria has domesticated and customised the integrated SDG Model (iSDG Nigeria) to promote coherent policy formulation and planning at national and sub-national levels. The iSDG Nigeria is a systems dynamic model which integrates the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) into one analytical framework and allows the Government and other entities at both Federal (national) and State (sub-national level) to scientifically, objectively and empirically determine the SDG priority sectors; synergies, interlinkages and multiplier effects across sectors; integrate the SDGs into the Development Plan, as well sectoral plans and strategies; and importantly, link such Plans with Budgets as well as monitor and report on progress towards the SDGs.

L-R: Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Geoffrey Onyeama; Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo State; Governor Dapo Abiodun of Ogun State; President Muhammadu Buhari; Governor Babajide Sanwoolu of Lagos State and Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs, H.E. Mrs Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire at the launch of the iSDG in New York.
UN Women with support from Procter & Gamble (P&G) and Afrigrants organized a meeting in Lagos with representatives from Nigeria’s private sector to explore and strategize on how to mainstream gender concerns into procurement policies and practices and to facilitate the establishment of a working group to implement strategies and solutions.

The one-day event brought together top decision makers and leaders across different industries including banking, oil and gas, telecommunications, food and beverage, manufacturing, and construction. Notable stakeholders in attendance included Mr. Bolaji Balogun, Chairman of Lafarge Group, who gave the keynote remarks as well as representatives from the Private Sector SDG Advisory Group, the Office of the Senior Special Advisor to the President on SDGs, the British Deputy High Commission, the African Development Bank, and women-owned business associations.

“Globally, UN Women is leading the advocacy on promoting gender-responsive procurement as a critical part of the solution for gender equality and women’s empowerment. This advocacy is driven by the conviction that the public and private sector can use procurement to achieve socio-economic change for women and girls,” stated Comfort Lamptey, the UN Women Country Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS in her remarks during the gathering.

The participants discussed some of the barriers and limitations women-owned businesses face in accessing and securing procurement contracts, particularly in terms of financial capability, resources and access to the same networks as male-owned business and male entrepreneurs. Some of the key strategies identified in solving such barriers include providing financial support to women-owned business through establishing a fund, providing capacity building support to women-owned businesses in terms of developing high quality bids and establishing a strong digital footprint that not only enhances the visibility of women-owned businesses online but strategically links them to more companies.

One of the major outcomes of the meeting was a decision to establish a working group to coordinate the implementation of the proposed strategies and solutions, comprising the private sector companies and women-owned business networks that were present at the meeting, as well as private sector networks, the Office of the Senior Special Advisor to the President on SDGs and state enterprise agencies. UN Women’s role will be to act as secretariat of the working group and to provide technical support for the design and implementation of gender responsive procurement strategies.

As part of its ongoing efforts to foster partnership between the private sector and women-owned businesses, UN Women has been supporting women entrepreneurs, particularly small-scale suppliers to access corporate value chains in Kaduna state. In 2018, UN Women, in partnership with P&G and Afrigrants trained 250 women from the State on financial literacy.
Enrolment Campaign Aims to Bring 1M Children Back to School in Borno

The Borno State Universal Basic Education Board, in partnership with UNICEF, flagged off the 2019 Enrolment Drive Campaign on 23rd September, 2019 to bring 1 million children back to school in Borno State.

The UNICEF Representative in Nigeria, Mr. Peter Hawkins, who spoke at the event hosted at the Galtimari Primary School in Maiduguri, advocated for effective synergy in all efforts aimed at enrolling children in school. According to him, an effective enrolment campaign prioritizes retention, completion and transition to higher learning. He therefore urged government to work towards adequate funding for basic education and providing a conducive learning environment for children in the state.

“Basic education is the key to success in life. It is important that a child can play, learn and aspire to be a productive member of the community. Children, this campaign is for you to bring your brother, sister, friend and neighbour to school tomorrow.”

“Your expectation should be to stay in school until the end of your studies so that you can be in control of your future and you can aspire as far as your dreams,” he said.

Hawkins also commended the European Union as well as the Norwegian and German governments for their funding support towards children’s education in Borno.

The Borno State Governor, Prof. Babagana Zulum, who appreciated UNICEF “for tremendous support financially, materially and human development”, urged parents in the state to avail their children the benefits of education.

The governor, who was represented by his deputy, Alhaji Umar Usman Kadafur, added that the state government has plans to enroll 40,000 orphans in Internally-displaced Persons Camps and host communities. According to him, 115,000 Almajiri children will be considered for integrated education in the next one year.

Speaking at the event, the Guest Speaker, Prof. Bulama Kagu, called for additional measures such as the national feeding programme to boost school enrolment. He said such intervention must be implemented in conflict-affected states to cover all primary schools.

“There must be deliberate interventions. Royal fathers must set targets. There must be synergy among civil societies. School-based Management Committees must be functional and motivated. Children of public officers should send their children to public schools.”

New Border Strategy to Enhance National Security, Protection of Migrants’ Rights

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) presented the National Border Management Strategy and Action Plan in Abuja, Nigeria.

IOM supported the Government of Nigeria to develop the strategy and action plan to further boost NIS’ effectiveness and efficiency in the management of Nigeria’s borders, and address the changing realities and new challenges of migration in the country.

“This is a key milestone in IOM’s approach to strengthening the migration governance in Nigeria and providing reintegration assistance to Nigerian returnees,” said Ukamaka Osigwe, IOM Nigeria National Programme Officer. “The decision to review and renew a national border management strategy couldn’t have come at a better time as it shows the willingness and commitment of the government to respond to the current challenges relating to migration and border management at the national, regional and global levels in a strategic manner.”

As regards the assisted voluntary return and reintegration, the strategy focuses on establishing training for government officials on the rights and responsibilities of Nigerian returnees, as well as providing shelter to returnees and conducting sensitization campaigns on the dangers of irregular migration.

Additionally, the new strategy is designed to reinforce social harmony as well as ensure the protection of migrants’ human rights and the protection of vulnerable migrants, and gender mainstreaming. It also factors in the special needs of cross-border communities with common heritage and close family ties across national boundaries, and the special considerations of managing borders in certain areas with significant security challenges.

“A border is not a war zone, it is a place where law enforcement agents must respect human rights of migrants and victims of trafficking,” said Muhammad Babandede, Comptroller General of the Nigeria Immigration Service. “A safe border is a safe nation,” he added.

The forum brought together approximately 100 officials from relevant ministries, departments and agencies of government, non-state actors, and civil society organizations working on border management in Nigeria. Stakeholders also deliberated on current issues and challenges in the country as it relates to migration management.

“I cannot stress enough how important it is to have produced such a document for Nigeria, and I could not agree more with Comptroller General on the necessity to have a border strategy which is migration, trade, human rights and gender-oriented,” said Eleni Zerzelidou, EU Project Officer Migration and Drugs.

“It is our expectation that the strategy becomes a live document for NIS and something for other law enforcement agencies in Nigeria to draw inspiration from.”

The strategy 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.
The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has stated that today’s world was faced with a ‘Climate Emergency’ and global crisis, which he described as a new threat to security and lives.

“Peace faces a new danger: the climate emergency, which threatens our security, our livelihoods and our lives,” he noted in his message on the 2019 International Peace Day, and presented at the event organised by the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Nigeria, in collaboration with Centre for Peace and Environmental Justice, and Lagos State Ministry of Environment and Water Resources.

In the message read by the Director of UN Information Centre (UNIC) in Nigeria, Ronald Kayanja, the Secretary General explained, “That is why it is the focus of this year’s International Day of Peace. And it’s why I am convening a Climate Action Summit. This is a global crisis.”

Guterres therefore urged all to take concrete climate action and demand it of their leaders. He added that “Only by working together can we make our only home peaceful, prosperous and safe for us and future generations. This is a race we can and must win.”

Mr Kayanja had earlier noted that though climate change had been with human society for a long time, “but more recently, we have experienced much faster changes in climate globally, with rapid rise of average temperature near the earth surface.”

He stressed that the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated were the leading cause of the earth rapidly changing climate and identified increased population, burning of fossil fuel like coal, oil and gas for electricity, as well as deforestation as other factors that have accelerated climate change.

“"The current conflicts in Nigeria are not unrelated to the changes in climate and so is the farmer herder violence witnessed in parts of Africa." Kayanja emphasised.

Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on 21 September. The General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples.

The 2019 theme "Climate Action for Peace" draws attention to the importance of combating climate change as a way to protect and promote peace throughout the world.

UN Humanitarian Coordinator Seeks Protection of Aid workers

There is the need for all parties to conflict in Nigeria especially the North East, to ensure the protection of aid workers and to respect international humanitarian law and the delivery of aid according to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality.

The Humanitarian Coordinator of the United Nations in Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon, in a statement made the call where he mourned the execution of an aid worker.

Describing the incident as shrinking of humanitarian space, he urged authorities to ensure that perpetrators were brought to justice

“The United Nations calls for the immediate release of all aid workers who are still in captivity”

Mr Kallon also expressed concerned about the “increasingly dangerous and restrictive operating environment for implementing humanitarian assistance in crisis-affected areas, where humanitarian aid worker continue to face challenges as they strive to safely and timely deliver urgent life-saving assistance”

The Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria explained that UN in Nigeria is working in line with the 2019-2021 Humanitarian Response Strategy, jointly agreed with the Government of Nigeria, to provide life-saving assistance to 6.2 million of the most vulnerable people in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states.
Feeding A Family of 10 Through UN Cash Assistance

In December 2018, Sharu Lada and her family fled their village in Doro, Borno State, due to an attack by non-state armed groups. Borno is the state most affected by the 10-year conflict in northeast Nigeria. Before their displacement, Madam Lada and her husband were farmers. They produced enough food to feed their family — and supplemented with income from the chickens and goats they reared. But after the attack, they lost their home, their small farm and their livestock. Lada and her husband have five children of their own, and were fostering three other children orphaned by the conflict. Life became very difficult for the family of 10.

When 40-year-old Sharu and her family arrived at the Stadium IDPs camp in Maiduguri, she was promptly registered into WFP’s Cash Based Transfer (CBT) programme. Through CBT, Sharu now receives monthly cash to buy her choice of food items and vegetables to provide healthy diets for her family.

“I buy food from the local markets,” explains Sharu. “Food items like beans, rice, milk and vegetables help me to feed my family well and keep them healthy.”

Yahya Assumes Duty as Head of UNDP Nigeria

UNDP’s newly appointed Resident Representative, Mohamed Yahya, formally commenced his duties in Nigeria. Mr Yahya will be UNDP’s first Resident Representative following the UN reforms that resulted in the separation of UNDP’s activities from the Resident Coordination system.

During the presentation of the credentials to the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Geoffrey Onyeama, Mr. Yahya explained that “Our activities will be guided by the needs of the country which have been captured in our Country Programme for Nigeria, but more also supporting the country to achieve the SDGs and responding to the security challenges in the North-East and the middle-belt.” UNDP will be developing a number of activities aimed at strengthening the image of the country in the region and abroad. Mr. Yahya added.

The Honourable Minister welcomed the new Head of UNDP to Nigeria and used the opportunity to reaffirm Government’s partnership to the programmes that UNDP will be implementing in the country.
The Nigeria We Want: UN, Partners Host First Edition of Naija Youth Talk

Young people today live in a world of unlimited potential. However, despite gains in the situation facing Nigerian children and young people in recent years, much remains to be done. Too many Nigerian children and young people are being left behind, especially when it comes to education.

Nigeria has the world’s highest number of out-of-school children — about 10.5 million Nigerian children are not in school. UNICEF wants to build on the momentum of young people as we approach the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child this year, and keep youth voices at the center of debate.

As such, UNICEF and partners, with funds from UK Aid, hosted the first edition of the Naija Youth Talk event on 9th September 2019 at the Silverbird Cinemas in Abuja to mark the 2019 International Literacy Day. The event, themed ‘The Nigeria We Want’, allowed young people reflect on and celebrate the progress that has been done. Too many Nigerian children and young people are being left behind, especially when it comes to education.

The event also provided opportunities for other young changemakers to speak about their work in the communities where they live. They include: Olaoluwa Osinbajo, Founder, AWA Customer; Seyi Oluyole, Executive Director, The Dream Nurture Foundation; Segun Araromi, Chief Executive Officer, SAEDConnect; Sagir Musa, President, UNICEF Youth Advocates for Education; and Aisha*, a school girl from Borno State.

A panel discussion on education and its challenges, moderated by UNICEF Communication Officer, Olawatosin Akingbulu, also featured key young people in government and civil society. They include: Tolu Ogunlesi, Special Assistant to the President on Digital Media; Maryam Laushi, Communication Expert; Hamzat Lawal, Founder, Connected Development; Farida Kabir, Advocate for women and girls in STEM.

The conversation with the youth in Nigeria continues as Naija Youth Talk events are hosted in the different regions around the country.

New Migration Health Assessment Facilities Open in Lagos, Nigeria

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) commissioned the establishment of a new Migration Health Assessment Centre (MHAC) block and laboratory in Lagos, Nigeria.

The new facilities are part of IOM’s activities to support the Nigerian public health department in promoting safe and regular migration, discourage irregular migration and human trafficking, as well as strengthen migration governance structures in the country. Two centres, in Abuja and Lagos, were established on 2 January 2014 to perform migration health assessments in Nigeria for visa applicants to the UK, Canada, Australia, USA and New Zealand.

The new MHAC block was officially opened by Franz Celestin, IOM Nigeria Chief of Mission and Dr Marwan Naoum, IOM Regional Coordinator for the Health Assessment Programme for sub-Saharan Africa. “IOM is committed to continue supporting the Federal Government of Nigeria in providing health assessment and promoting public health, safety and security of migrants and their communities,” said Celestin at the opening ceremony.

In addition to health assessments for migrants, the MHAC offers a broad range of services including treatment for medical conditions which pose a risk to public health such as tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases, immunization against vaccine preventable diseases, prophylaxis against malaria and tuberculosis, and professional medical assistance and special travel arrangements for sick or vulnerable persons during travel.

Since 2014, the number of migrants accessing MHAC services has increased by 60 per cent, a development that has called for the expansion of the facility in Lagos. Recent statistics show that Nigerians account for 25 per cent of all caseloads from Africa.

“MHAC is opening a fully equipped laboratory and has procured new additional equipment such as the IGRA machine, which is used for tuberculosis screening, and Genexpert machine for gonorrea and chlamydia testing,” said Dr Samuel Ahadi Baghuma, IOM Nigeria Migration Health Officer. “This will reduce the high cost of conducting these tests and ensure timely submission of medical results of applicants to the various embassies within 48 hours of screening,” he added.

The new medical block will house the customer care and data processing units in order to ensure a more conducive environment to attend to applicants and to ensure better data protection of applicant records.
PHOTO NEWS

Captions, from left to right and top to bottom:

1. A cross-section of dignitaries on the high table at the Nigeria High Level Side Event on the margins of the 74th UNGA held on 24 September 2019, in New York. 5th from the right is President Muhammadu Buhari.

2. Emir of Kano, His Royal Highness Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, addresses the audience at the Nigeria High Level Side Event on the margins of the 74th UNGA held on 24 September 2019, in New York.

3. A cross-section of the audience at the Nigeria High Level Side Event on the margins of the 74th UNGA held on 24 September 2019, in New York.

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