



UNITED NATIONS  
NIGERIA

# NEWSLETTER



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## UN Supports Nigeria's COVID-19 Response, Mobilises \$2 Million for Vital Medical Supplies

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Against the backdrop of global lockdown necessitated by Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and its impact on trades and global economy, the United Nations system in Nigeria has mobilised the sum of two million United States Dollars (\$2 million) to procure essential medical supplies in support of Nigerian Government's efforts at containing COVID-19 and adequately caring for confirmed cases.

This was disclosed by the UN Resident-Coordinator Edward Kallon, while engaging with the 'National Leadership on COVID-19' led by the Hon. Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire; representative of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19; representative of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC); and the representative of the World Bank.

"The United Nations system in Nigeria will support rapid procurement of disease commodity packages for surveillance, prevention and control, and clinical management." He disclosed, "The United Nations will support the Government of Nigeria to immediately set up a Nigeria COVID-19 Response Fund," which according to him, will act as 'a single national platform and financing framework that will coordinate partnerships and mobilise resources and strategies for effective and impactful response.

Mr Kallon noted that this gesture was part of the collective United Nations strategy to amplify Government's efforts to respond to COVID-19, and a recognition that a collaborative engagement...continue on page 2.

**Top, Foreground:** UN Resident-Coordinator Edward Kallon, welcomes Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire (Middle) and National Coordinator of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, Dr Sanni Aliyu (Left), to the UN House. **Down:** R-L: Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire; UN Resident-Coordinator Edward Kallon; Coordinator of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, Dr Sanni Aliyu and a dignitary at the meeting held on 23 March

## UN Resident-Coordinator Joins Vice-President at Hack Covid-19 Call Centre



UN Resident-Coordinator Edward Kallon (Right) joins Nigeria's Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo (Left) at Hack Covid-19 Call Centre Abuja on 30 March 2020.

The United Nations Resident-Coordinator Edward Kallon, on Monday 30 March 2020, joined Nigeria's Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo and the Director General of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu, at the Hack COVID-19 Call Centre hosted by Civic Innovation Lab, Abuja.

The Call Centre is aimed at reaching out to rural communities and vulnerable population with timely and correct information on #coronavirus.

Participating in the Google Hangout organised at the Centre, the Vice President defended the shutdowns announced by President Muhammadu Buhari, "I think it is entirely legal. These steps are proactive, very relevant, important and backed by law."

Mr Kallon was accompanied by the Resident Representative of UNDP in Nigeria, Mr Mohamed Yahya.

## UN Supports Nigeria's COVID-19 Response...Continued from page 1

... is urgently required in view of the multifaceted nature of the virus and the implications to socio-economic situation in Nigeria.

The Hon. Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire, thanked the UN system for their support and assured that the government would ensure that resources are deployed to where most needed while the Federal Ministry of Health was fired up for the best scenario and ready for the worst situation.

He emphasised that the government would continue to follow the containment strategy it has in place.

### Expanded Engagement with multilateral donors

Following the engagement with the 'National COVID-19 Leadership' the Resident Coordinator and some members of the UN Country Team further held a multilateral partners' meeting involving representatives of the European Union; the US Embassy; the British International Development Agency; the Federal Ministry of Health; the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19.



At the head of the table is the Hon. Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire, and a cross-section of other multilateral partners at the meeting held on 30 March in the UN House Abuja.

## COVID-19 and the Link to Ending Violence Against Women and Girls



Photo: UNICEF/2015

Around the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting women and men differently. Gender inequalities are typically worsened by crises and the coronavirus context is no different as women are hit harder by the effects of COVID-19. Women make up 70% of the world's health sector, bear the responsibility of unpaid care work, and are likely to face increased levels of domestic and sexual violence.

In Nigeria, the National Centre for Diseases Control (NCDC) reports that the bulk of confirmed cases of COVID-19 are domiciled in Lagos. The Lagos State Government has taken proactive steps to prevent and limit the further spread of COVID-19 within the state. Civil servants from Grade Level 12 and below have been mandated to stay at home, while markets have been closed and several businesses shut down in a bid to contain the health pandemic. The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in his state media broadcast, also ordered a mandatory lockdown of all activities except essential services in Lagos, Ogun and the Federal Capital Territory from the 30th of March 2020.

The implications for survivors of violence against women and girls (VAWG) are immense. For many women and girls, they will remain trapped at home with their abusers as the state is placed under mandatory lockdown. Recognizing this danger posed to survivors of VAWG, management of the Mirabel Centre; a Sexual Assault Referral Centre, made the critical decision to remain open daily from 10am - 2pm. Since the lockdown began on 23rd March 2020, the centre has provided services to over fifteen clients, within just a 4-day period. Most of these cases have been incidences of defilement. There are growing concerns that the lockdown will lead to an increase in rape and other forms of sexual violence as survivors remain in close proximity with perpetrators over a prolonged period of time.

The recorded cases show an increase in the level of reporting as it concerns survivors of sexual violence. It is also possible to infer linkage between kids being out of school due to the enforced lockdown and the increase in reported cases. As the data from China on COVID and violence against women and girls has shown, it is extremely likely that we will continue to witness a

surge in the cases of violence against women and girls during the lockdown and there must be response strategies in place to address the gendered implications of the pandemic.

Amidst the COVID crisis, there are critical concerns as refuges for survivors of violence such as the Mirabel Centre struggle to remain open. While there are available essential health supplies such as hand sanitizers and masks, other challenges abound. It is exceedingly more costly to stock up on these supplies as prices have surged beyond 1000%. Public hospital laboratories are

also closed which means medical tests have to be carried out in private laboratories which are not more expensive but also carry lower guarantees of professionalism and confidentiality of information.

Over the past few days, the Mirabel Centre has reported three additional cases of sexual violence against adult women. Due to the lockdown, counseling had to take place over the phone as the only staff working from the centre presently are doctors. In addition, the centre depends on other agencies to provide services to clients which are outside their scope of engagement. Where these agencies have shut down either due to government directives or protection measures for staff, it has become more difficult to make the necessary referrals. The Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team (DSVRT) and government shelters have since been shut down.

The lockdown in Lagos carries severe consequences as the Lagos State government has stipulated one-month imprisonment or three months of community service for anyone who violates the stay-at-home order. If the lockdown continues and the number of incidences continues to rise, it may become extremely difficult for centers to respond effectively per the demand. This is even more evident with the shutdown of the DSVRT that should be at the forefront of responding to incidences of VAWG during this period. In addition, it will be extremely difficult for staff, especially the medical and counseling professionals, to commute to the centre daily, as transport service providers remain scarce.

A gender-responsive strategy must be underscored by the government and all stakeholders in dealing with the fall-out of the COVID-19 crisis. This includes the prioritization of gender-based violence (GBV) Centres as essential services, as well as the inclusion of women in decision-making to ensure that valid gender concerns are adequately captured. UN Women is currently negotiating with state governments for the provision of government-branded vehicles and drivers to aid the movement of staff at the Centres.

## Life in Quarantine after Detecting Nigeria's First COVID-19 Case

*He turned up with flu-like symptoms at a medical centre in Ogun state in the southwest of Nigeria. Dr Amara Allison, who was on duty, examined the patient and ordered that he be isolated immediately. She had just diagnosed Nigeria's first COVID-19 patient. Along with four health workers and 35 other people who had been in contact with the country's index case, Dr Allison was placed on a 14-day quarantine. She recounts her experience staying indoors for a fortnight.*



Dr Amara Allison

### Being quarantined is quite kaleidoscopic.

On the first day, I didn't quite understand the gravity of it. I guess I was unconsciously in a lot of denial, thinking 'no, not me' which in retrospect wasn't such a bad thing. This feeling lasted the first 48 hours.

I was cheerful and able to reassure my family. They were the only ones with whom I could share that I had been potentially exposed to the virus but could not share with them more details on how it happened in virtue of medical confidentiality.

By my third day, it was like a flood gate opened and a dam of emotions hit me smack in my face and gut. I woke up on day three, and I just couldn't get out of bed. That was the day the protective shock wore off. I was now unavoidably afraid. This point was where I realized the importance of a support system. Luckily my family didn't fall short. They called to reassure me and in some way themselves. It was mostly welcome. I say mostly because I had highs and lows, periods when I absolutely didn't want to talk or feel like talking to anyone, even though I wanted them to call as it reassured me.

The psychological trauma was my greatest challenge, just being with my thoughts alone for 14 days, good, bad, ugly. I also had to deal with the accompanying boredom and missing real human contact. It hit me really badly because aside from all that was going on, I'm a very physically active person and I couldn't be that during this period.

However, it wasn't all fear if I'm being honest. The quarantine period also gave me time to self-develop as much as possible (through online courses) which was also a very welcome form of distraction.

To make the 14 days of quarantine liveable my organization had a psychologist call in to check on us twice daily (morning and night), so that gave me a lot of reassurance. They also had some-one call in everyday specially for our physical needs.

The World Health Organization's (WHO) team in Nigeria also provided their support. The WHO doctors were calling me regularly to provide words of encouragement and advice on the principles of quarantine. I was also able to stay abreast of the latest developments on the virus through the WHO online platforms.

By my fifth day in, I learned to dispel my boredom and persistent anxiety with movies and books. I'm a fitness enthusiast and as difficult as it was for me to muster the mental energy to workout, whenever I did eventually workout, it lifted my mood significantly and left me feeling healthier.

We were comfortable in quarantine: steady power supply, spacious rooms, healthy frequent meals surely made it liveable. It's also important to anticipate boredom, low moods, maybe even depression. Having several means of entertainment would remedy these to an extent. The power of a good support system cannot be over emphasized, but overall maintaining a positive outlook as much as possible is imperative to getting through any quarantine period.

## UN, Government, Partners Mark Int'l Women's Month in Nigeria



L-R: Ambassador of Japan to Nigeria, H.E. Yutaka Kikuta; Commissioner of Women Affairs, Yobe state, Hajiya Hauwa Bah Abubakar; Special Assistant (Technical) to the Minister of Women Affairs, Ms. Princess Jummai Idonije; UN Women Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ms. Comfort Lamptey; and UN Women Deputy Representative, Mr. Lansana Wonneh. Photo credit: Abdulsalam Khalid

On the global calendar, the 8th of March is celebrated each year as International Women's Day. This year, the UN, Federal Government, diplomatic partners and civil society dedicated the entire month of March to commemorate the strength, resilience and achievements of Nigerian women. 2020 is a significant year for women's rights globally as it marks the 5th anniversary of the Sustainable Development Goals, the 10th anniversary of UN Women's establishment, the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, as well as 25 years since the historic Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action which set in motion a global movement for the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. This year also features the launch of the Generation Equality campaign.

The Generation Equality Campaign is a global campaign spearheaded by UN Women to inspire and bring together the next generations of women's rights activists with the gender equality advocates and visionaries who were instrumental in creating the Beijing Platform for Action 25 years ago.

International Women's Month was a prime opportunity to provide a stocktaking of the progress made in advancing women's rights, as well as to underscore some of the persisting challenges towards achieving gender equality. Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, notes the impatience of this generation to close the inequality gaps on all fronts, especially on the unmovable economic inequality. "Women and girls use triple the time and energy of boys and men to look after the household. That costs them equal opportunities in education, in the job market and in earning power. It's a driver of repeating poverty. Young women raising families are 25 per cent more likely than men to live in extreme poverty, affecting millions of young children, with impacts that last into later life for both mother and child."

UN Women led the coordination of efforts by the UN system in Nigeria and managed a robust calendar of diverse activities and events around the country. The first half of the month included commemorative events illuminated by robust traditional media coverage and social media engagement. The roll-out of the activities and events in the second half of the month scheduled by the UN, government and partners was interrupted by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the public health crisis, implementing organisations and bodies made the critical decision to suspend physical activities and follow recommendations and

guidelines by the government and the WHO to apply social distancing and other measures to slow the spread of the disease.

As Nigeria and the rest of the world continued to record increases in affected persons during the month, the data gave emphasis to the significance of International Women's Month and the importance of investing in the rights of women and girls. Women are uniquely impacted by the health crisis in a number of ways. The disaggregation of data by sex reveals that more men than women have contracted the novel coronavirus disease.

The secondary impacts however have a greater consequence on women as with all global crises, gender inequalities become exacerbated. Some of the differential considerations of the impact include a lack of inclusion of women in decision-making around COVID-19 despite the pivotal role women play as the majority of frontline healthcare workers; as well as an increased likelihood of experiencing domestic and sexual violence for women and girls compounded by the challenge in some cases of the recognition of shelters and domestic violence response teams as essential services by authorities. In addition, women are faced with greater responsibility for caring for children, carrying out domestic work and caring for the sick at home. A large part of the informal workforce, Nigerian women will be disproportionately affected by the economic fallout of the lockdown restrictions.

**CORONAVIRUS FAQs**

**Does Nigeria have capacity to respond in the event of an outbreak?**

Nigeria has over 20 states with functional emergency operation centres, which can be activated to provide a coordinated response at the state level.

#COVID19  
#CoronavirusOutbreak

World Health Organization  
Nigeria

## A Sunny Day in Gubio Camp: How Clean Energy is Bringing Relief to Conflict-



*Sainna begins his daily routine by pouring chlorine in the tanks to ensure the water is purified. Photo: Sascha Pimentel/IOM*

It is nine o'clock and the sun is already beating down on Gubio camp, one of 63 sites hosting internally displaced people in Maiduguri, north-east Nigeria. March marks the end of the dry season, also known as harmattan, when much of the dusty winds from the Sahara cast a hazy shadow over the capital of Borno state for roughly three months, but not today.

In the middle of the camp, a water tower rises above rows of tarpaulin roofs. Sainna, a slender 35-year-old man, climbs atop the tower and gently pours a bucket of chlorine into two tanks, one spoonful at a time. And so, his daily routine begins.

Sainna lives in Gubio camp with his wife Maira and seven children, some of whom were born inside the camp.

In early 2014, the family fled their home in Gamboru, Ngala, when non-state armed groups stormed the village killing more than 300 residents, destroying houses and forcing people into displacement. Several other attacks involving improvised explosive devices have since followed.

In Gamboru, Sainna was a farmer, selling his vegetables in the local market where goods and traders from Nigeria and neighboring Cameroon converged.

"When Boko Haram came, we fled to Cameroon, from there we went to Chad and then to Niger. And then we arrived in Maiduguri," he recalls.

Six years on, north-east Nigeria remains steeped in conflict. According to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), nearly two million individuals remain internally displaced in the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, and 7.7 million need humanitarian assistance, including 4.1 million children.

Sainna longs to return to Gamboru once security is restored. But in the meantime, he spends his days in Gubio taking care not only of his family but other IDPs as well. When he first arrived, IOM staff noticed he had a knack for carpentry, so he was hired to help repair damaged shelters.

Later, Sainna began to repair latrines and showers, and later took over the maintenance of the waterpoints in Gubio where IOM manages a borehole that provides safe and clean water to over 6,000 people.

Clean water provision is essential to maintain good hygiene inside camps and camp-like settings. Communities routinely take part in sensitization sessions in camps where they learn about how handwashing prevents the outbreak of diseases like COVID-19.

IOM teams are now changing how they spread this information to camp residents, substituting the usual sessions which are held in large groups with door-to-door visits to limit the likelihood of community spread in the event of an outbreak in the camp.

Every day, 25,000 litres of water are consumed through four waterpoints and the average resident consumes 15 litres per day. These boreholes are powered by solar energy ensuring a cheap and steady supply of water for the community without negatively impacting the environment.

The facilities need to be monitored and cleaned regularly, making sure the dust does not accumulate on the solar panels, especially during harmattan.

"I wake up every morning before sunrise and walk over to the waterpoint to chlorinate the tanks... I must wait for the chlorine to purify the water, so I visit the latrines and showers and repair them if needed.

By the time I'm back to the borehole I open the tap and people start gathering to collect the water. I keep an eye on the panels and if they're dusty I clean them with a soft cloth to avoid scratching them." Sainna repeats this process two to three times a day.

Local committees of camp residents jointly maintain 34 latrines and 51 showers, keeping them in good condition. Above each block a sign reads 'mata' and 'kamu' or 'maza' and 'konga', the words for woman and man in Hausa and Kanuri, respectively. Read full story: <https://storyteller.iom.int/stories/sunny-day-gubio-camp-how-clean-energy-bringing-relief-conflict-affected-nigeria>

## Leaving No One Behind: Protecting People in Prisons from COVID-19

The world is amidst an unprecedented pandemic. With 203 countries and territories affected, the coronavirus infection (COVID-19) is taking a toll on the world's population with close to 700,000 cases and over 33,000 associated deaths as of 31 March 2020.

According to figures from the Nigerian Center for Disease Control, Nigeria has now recorded 131 confirmed cases, including two deaths. Under the leadership of the Presidential Task Force on COVID 19 Response a National COVID19 Multi-Sectoral Pandemic Response Plan has been elaborated and is being continuously adjusted as the pandemic evolves. As Government at Federal and State levels is ramping up its capacities to prevent the further spread of the virus, provide for testing and contact tracing, and expand isolation and treatment facilities, as well as to mitigate the impact of its measures on the indigenous population as well as the economy, there are a number of segments of the society who are particularly vulnerable but have not yet found themselves at the center of attention.

One of such groups are people in prisons and in other places of detention. While controlling access might be easier in such environments, once the virus has reached a prison, as it has happened already in other several countries, preventing its further spread is significantly harder. Exercising social distancing in an often overcrowded space is close to impossible. Moreover, prison population have a weaker health profile making them particularly vulnerable to communicable diseases such as COVID-19 as shown in a recent study on HIV and AIDS situation, available health ser-

vices and drug use in Nigeria prisons conducted by the National Agency for Combatting HIV/AIDS and the Nigerian Correctional Service with the support of UNODC. This situation puts not only detainees at higher risk, but also people working in prisons.

The Attorney General's Office as well as the Nigerian Presidential Committee for the decongestion of the Correctional Centers are presently evaluating multiple options to decongest prisons. Options include to accelerate the release of those convicted (or accused) of minor offences as well as those whose sentence would be completed in the nearer future anyhow. Moreover, this appears the right moment to test the newly established framework for providing alternatives to detention. At the same time, when if not now is the right time to take a look at the health services accessible to prisoners.

According to the Nelson Mandela Rules, "The provision of health care for prisoners is a State responsibility. Prisoners should enjoy the same standards of health care that are available in the community, and should have access to necessary health-care services free of charge without discrimination on the grounds of their legal status." Thus, the deployment of personal protective equipment, basic medical equipment and medicines as well as training for prison health workers as part of the overall effort to respond to the pandemic are of paramount importance.

In order to support countries in their efforts, UNODC has collected a range of tools aimed at preventing and mitigating the spread of COVID19 in prisons which have been developed by various actors in the course of the past weeks and days.

## World Wildlife Day: UN to support Nigeria in Tackling Wildlife Crime

One year ago, on World Wildlife Day 2019, UNODC had raised concerns about the trend of increased trafficking of pangolin scales through Nigerian ports. A recent UNODC wildlife crime threat assessment in West and Central Africa confirmed this trend with seizures of pangolin scales originating from or being trafficked through Nigeria escalating from approximately two tons in 2015, to close to eight tons in 2016 and 2017 respectively, and almost 24 tons in the first seven months of 2018. The assessment shows that between 2014 and 2018, half of the 40 largest seizures of pangolin scales could be traced back to Nigeria.

Considering the trends of the phenomenon, it is crucial for Nigeria to strengthen its criminal justice response to tackle the illicit trafficking in wildlife and forest products. Until recently, wildlife crime has not been viewed as priority area of intervention in Nigeria, both by national counterparts and international partners. A 2016 World Bank report found that in Sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria was the third lowest recipient of international investments to fight against illegal wildlife trade, with only 0.3 million US dollars invested between 2010 and 2016. However, with the alarming trends of pangolins trafficking related to Nigeria, things are changing.

At the request of the Government, UNODC, together with its partner organizations under the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), will initiate in 2020 the implementation of the ICWC Toolkit and Indicator Framework for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime. Both tools will provide the basis to conduct the first comprehensive assessment of Nigeria's policy, legal and institutional preparedness to effectively tackle wildlife and forest crime, paving the way for a holistic and evidence-based response by the Nigerian government. The ICWC Toolkit and Indicator Framework were introduced to national stakeholders at the last CITES stakeholders meeting

that took place on Monday 2 March 2020 at the Federal Ministry of Environment in Abuja. This support is made possible through a generous contribution of the European Union to ICCWC.

Mr. Timothy Daniel John, Head of Wildlife and CITES Management Division at the Federal Ministry of Environment welcomed the upcoming implementation of the ICWC Toolkit and Indicator Framework for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crimes. "The increase of trafficking of illicit wildlife and forest products over the last couple of years in Nigeria is particularly worrying and it is time for national and international partners to take the necessary measures for an efficient response.

The implementation of the ICWC Toolkit and Indicator Framework will identify the strengths and weaknesses of Nigeria's current response to wildlife and forest crime, thus contributing to the development of an adequate action plan for the various stakeholders to tackle this serious crime."

**COVID-19 FAQs**

**How likely am I to catch COVID-19?**

The risk depends on where you are - and more specifically, whether there is a COVID-19 outbreak unfolding there.

For most people in most locations the risk of catching COVID-19 is still low. However, there are now places around the world (cities or areas) where the disease is spreading. For people living in, or visiting, these areas the risk of catching COVID-19 is higher.

COVID-19 outbreaks can be contained and transmission stopped, as has been shown in China and some other countries. Unfortunately, new outbreaks can emerge rapidly.

## International Women’s Day Inter-Generational Dialogue



Dignitaries at the event including the Honourable Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen and the UN Women Country Representative, Ms. Comfort Lamptey.

The Government of Nigeria through the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs convened an Inter-Generational Dialogue on the 5th of March 2020, as part of International Women’s Month activities. The event was hosted at the National Center for Women’s Development as a vehicle to drive discussions to accelerate gender equality in Nigeria, and foster conversations between the older and younger generation of women activists who are driving the agenda for change.

In attendance at the inter-generation dialogue were several dignitaries and speakers including the Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen; Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ohanire; Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs, H.E. Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire; Chief of Staff to the Deputy Senate President, Dr. Otive Igbuzor, Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, Mrs. Ifeoma Anagbogu; UN Resident Coordinator in Nigeria, Mr. Edward Kallon; UN Women Representative to

Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ms. Comfort Lamptey; UNFPA Deputy Country Representative, Ms. Erika Goldson; and the representative of HRM Lamido Sanusi, Former Emir of Kano.

The UN Resident Coordinator recognized the year 2020 as the Decade for Action with Goal 5 (gender equality) as the fine thread which weaves through all the SDGs. He went on to make three solid commitments to drive forward the achievement of gender equality at the UN level: firstly, to work with UN agencies to increase the number of women in Nigeria UN Country Team; secondly, affirmative action drive to give opportunities to persons living with disabilities; and ensuring that a minimum of 30% of all peace-building funds primarily support women.

The discussions at the event centred around stocktaking of the progress and challenges which still persist in achieving gender equality. The 12 Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were also highlighted. One of the 25 younger women, referred to as a Beijing Eaglet, Ms. Olabukunola Williams, spoke on the area of education and training of women, describing education as a tool to help women make informed decisions. She described the progress made on the frontiers of education although there are still huge disparities in the literacy rates for men and women.

In her remarks, UN Women Nigeria Country Representative, Ms. Comfort Lamptey described 2020 as a pivotal year where the global community celebrates 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. She underscored the significance of the 25th anniversary as a transfer of the mantle of leadership to the younger women who would become the drivers of change going forward.

The dialogue also underscored the participation of a new crop of religious leaders as tools for advocating women’s empowerment and gender equality.

### IWM: ‘Ring the Bell’ Event



Attendees striking the Each for Equal pose during the Ring the Bell ceremony in Lagos

The Ring the Bell ceremony is an annual initiative by Stock Exchanges around the world to show solidarity and support for gender equality. On the 6th of March 2020, this year’s Ring the Bell ceremony was hosted by the Nigerian Stock Exchange in commemoration of International Women’s Month. The theme of the ceremony was Each for Equal to underscore the role private sector organisations must each play to create a more gender-equal society.

The UN Women Nigeria Country Rep. Comfort Lamptey, represented by the UN Women Nigeria Private Sector Consultant, Weyinmi Omawuli, delivered a special message on the HeForShe initiative, urging male leaders in the private sector to stand in solidarity with women towards achieving SDG-5 by 2030.

### IWM: Generation Equality Football Match



Team UN Nigeria with the UN Women Country Rep. Comfort Lamptey and Hon. Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen before the match kicked off

On 5th March 2020, the United Nations participated in an all-female football match in commemoration of International Women’s Month and the Red Card Campaign, which aims to end all

forms of violence against women and girls. The Generation Equality football match was hosted by a local non-governmental organization in Abuja, FAME Foundation. The Honourable Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen performed the official kick-off of the match by launching the ball onto the pitch.

Team UN Nigeria played against five other all-female teams namely Team US Embassy, Team British High Commission, Team AMAC / Fame Foundation, Team NUJ and Team Helpline. The UN team played a good game, winning the first match against Team British High Commission with two goals to naught. Team Helpline, who won the next round with the UN Team, won the football tournament cup.

Other highlights at the event included spirited routines by the Generation Equality cheerleading squad and free cervical screening for women.

# Boosting Decent Jobs and Enhancing Skills for Youth in Africa’s Digital Economy

*In an effort to mitigate the youth employment challenge and provide opportunities for youth in Nigeria to acquire requisite digital skills for the emerging digital economy, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Telecommunications Union (ITU) undertook a high-level mission to Nigeria to consult with Government and partners on boosting decent jobs and enhancing skills for youth in the digital economy.*

As part of a joint ILO-ITU programme on Boosting decent jobs and enhancing digital skills for youth in Africa’s digital economy, which is supported by the African Union, the Regional Directors of ILO, Ms Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon and ITU, Mr Andrew Rugege, jointly undertook a two-day high-level mission on 3-4 March 2020 to Abuja, Nigeria, to consult with representatives of the Government, the UN, development partners, academia and youth representatives.

While addressing partners at the consultative meetings, the Regional Director of the ILO, Ms Samuel-Olonjuwon informed the partners that the Joint ILO-ITU programme on “Boosting decent work and enhancing digital skills for youth in Africa’s digital economy” contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, Ouagadougou +10 and Agenda 2063, amongst others.

Ms Samuel-Olonjuwon spelt out the aim of the programme to include: Job creation and entrepreneurship opportunities in the digital economy (demand side); Investment in youth digital skills (supply side); and Preparation of private and public employment services for digital era (labour intermediation).

The programme which will operate at both continental and national levels will initially focus on 5 +1 countries, namely Cote d’Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa. These countries were selected based on commitments by governments, partners and youth themselves. The programme would be drawn up according to the peculiar needs of each country.

The Regional Director of the ITU, Mr Andrew Rugege, stated that Africa was ready to take up the challenge of getting young people to key into and benefit from the enormous gains in the digital economy. The ITU’s mission was to bridge the IT divide by investing in youth in Africa. He commended the governments of the selected countries for their readiness to provide an enabling environment for the implementation of the programme.

During a joint meeting, the Honourable Minister of Labour and Employment, the Honourable Minister of Communication and Digital Economy and the Honourable Minister of Youth and Sports Development agreed to work together to ensure the success of the programme in Nigeria.

The Minister of Labour and Employment, Dr Chris Ngige, announced the set-up of an inter-ministerial task team comprising the ministries of Labour and Employment, Communication and Digital Economy, Youths and Sports Development and Women Affairs, as well as other relevant agencies to key into the emerging digital economy and maximise the opportunities available to young people in Nigeria. He said that inter-ministerial synergy had become imperative in line with recommendations of the National Economic Advisory Council to the President, adding that time had gone when ministries and even parastatals within ministries worked in silos. The Minister commended the Joint ILO-ITU partnership and implored the team to target the abundant digital literacy and skills of Nigerian youths and turn them into productive digital ventures, which could also help to address cybercrimes.

Speaking in the same vein, the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Dr Isa Ali Ibrahim, expressed the preparedness of Nigeria for the digital economy, utilising the partnership of the private sector to create jobs and lift 100 million Nigerians from poverty in 10 years, in line with the vision of the Presi-

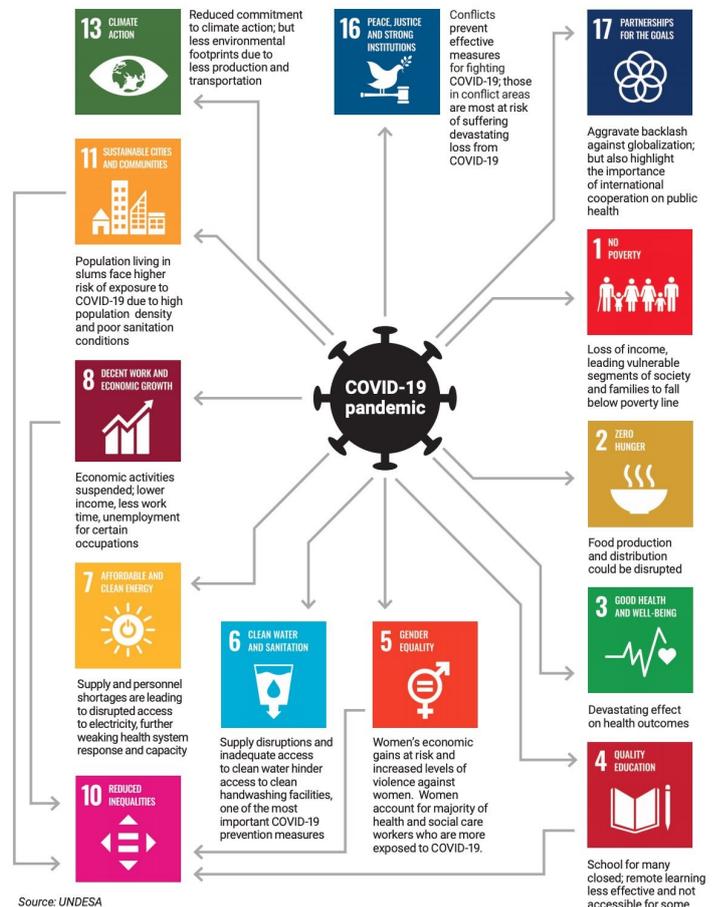
dent. He gave an overview of the strategic pillars of Nigeria’s digital economic vision as well as its goals, saying the focus was to leverage the emerging digital capacities to churn out employers of labour through appropriate alignment of certificates with skills.

On his part, the Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Mr Sunday Dare, commended the ILO-ITU initiative and highlighted the need for sustainability. He called for stronger commitment to ensure youths are not only empowered but made investors and employers of labour.

At a separate meeting, Mr Timothy Olawale, Director-General of the Nigeria Employers’ Consultation Association (NECA), stated that youth unemployment was of serious concern to the organization. In an effort to contribute to empowering youth in digital skills, NECA invested in a Digital Learning Centre to equip youth for the industry. There were numerous jobs in the digital economy and that youth needed to be adequately trained to be able to take up or create jobs.

Other partners that were consulted included the United Nations, the World Bank, other development partners, Baze University and youth representatives. They all expressed their readiness to work together to ensure the success of the programme

FIGURE 5: COVID-19 AFFECTING ALL SDGS



## Federal Government Grants UNAIDS Full Accreditation

Recognizing the importance of Nigeria and the UN system in the fight to end AIDS by 2030, both in the Africa region and globally, the Government of Nigeria in March 2019 granted the UNAIDS Nigeria Country Office full diplomatic accreditation. The essence of the accreditation is to facilitate the effective discharge and fulfillment of UNAIDS mission, duties and responsibilities with all the necessary privileges and immunities to the satisfaction of the Government of Nigeria as well as UNAIDS.

On 10th March 2020, UNAIDS Country Director, Dr Erasmus Morah formally presented his letter of commission to the Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Mr Geoffrey Onyeama. Dr Morah was privileged to be joined at the presentation ceremony by the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Mr Edward Kallon, along with his Senior Political Adviser and four members of the UNAIDS Nigeria team.



L-R: Dr Erasmus Morah, UNAIDS Country Director, Nigeria; Mr Geoffrey Onyeama, Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria Mr Edward Kallon, United Nations Resident Coordinator, Nigeria

### IWM: Virtual Reality Screening of Daughters of Chibok



The film producer assisting a guest with the VR head gear.

The British High Commission in collaboration with UNDP and UN Women commemorated IWM in Nigeria with the screening of the short, virtual reality film, Daughters of Chibok. The screening was hosted in Abuja on the 9th of March 2020.

It tells the story of the infamous abduction of the 276 school-girls in the town of Chibok, North-Eastern Nigeria, which sparked the Bring Back Our Girls campaign worldwide. The film deals with the aftermath of the terror and is told from the perspective of the mothers of the abducted girls, capturing their grief and hope for the return of their daughters. The event also featured panel discussions with the film's producer, Joel Kachi Benson, the UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Mohamed Yahya, a Chibok mother featured in the film, and was moderated by Channels TV Anchor, Maupe Ogun-Yusuf

### IWM: Launch of One Stop Centre in Sokoto

In celebration of International Women's Month, the Spotlight Initiative UN Women team supported the launch of essential services in Sokoto, for women and girls who are survivors of gender-based violence. The doors to the Nana Khadijah Centre were officially opened on the 19th of March 2020.

Situated within the Sokoto Specialist Centre, the one-stop centre which is being managed by Partners for Justice, a partner organization with the Spotlight Initiative, has been set up to provide holistic services including medical, counseling and psychosocial support to survivors of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. On the day of the formal launch, the centre recorded its very first client.

The Commissioner, Permanent Secretary, and Directors of Women Affairs brought in a 3-year-old for examination and counselling. The client was a victim of sexually abuse perpetrated by a family member who is reported to be suffering from mental illness.



Staff of the Nana Khadijah Centre



**Captions, from left to right in a clockwise direction:**

1. *In compliance with maintaining physical distancing, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of UN in Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon, welcomes in a special way, the Honourable Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire, to the UN House Abuja, on 23 March 2020*
2. *R-L: Resident-Coordinator Edward Kallon; Director General of Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu and the Resident Representative of UNDP Nigeria, Mr Mohammed Yahya at Hack COVID-19 Call Centre, hosted by Civic Innovation Hub, Abuja on 30 March 2020.*
3. *National Coordinator of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, Dr Sanni Aliyu, washes his hands on arrival at the UN House Abuja on 23 March 2020.*

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