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NEWSLETTER



UN Country Team Holds Retreat, Reaffirms Support To Nigeria



A group photograph of UN Country Team (UNCT) members and invited dignitaries at the end of the opening ceremony of the UNCT Annual Retreat.

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Nigeria has reaffirmed its support to the development aspirations of the Government of Nigeria, and the overall wellbeing of the Nigerian people.

"We are committed to Nigeria's development aspirations and the achievement of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development," said the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the UN system in Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon, at the 3-day annual retreat of the UNCT held 30 March - 1 April 2021, at the Zuma Rock Resorts, Suleja Niger State.

The Country Team led by Mr Kallon, committed to prioritising its programming support to eradicating poverty in Nigeria, reaping the demographic dividend by supporting the youth and gender equality; strengthening human rights, peace and social cohesion; as well as climate adaptation and mitigation to help achieve the SDGs.

The retreat was also attended by government partners, including Princess Adejoke Orellope-Adefulire, the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs; Mr Aniefiok Johnson, representing the Chief of Staff to the President, Prof. Ibrahim Gambari; Alhaji Ahmed Matani (Secretary to the Niger State Government) representing the Niger State Governor, H.E. Abubakar Sanni Bello; and the Senior Special Assistant to the President, supporting the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, Alhaji Musa Bungudu; among others.

From the private sector were Ms. Ibukun Awosika, the Chairman, Board of Directors, First Bank of Nigeria Limited; and Mr Bolaji Balogun, the Chief Executive Officer of Chapel Hill Denham. The theme of the retreat was "Strengthening UNCT support to SDGs implementation - Going Forward".

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Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the UN system in Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon



Spotlight Initiative



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

Spotlight Initiative Provides Hope For Survivors Of Gender-Based Violence

Blessing Ojukwu, 30, became pregnant after she was raped 10 years ago. “My family threw me out of the house. I had nowhere to go so I lived in an uncompleted building and hawked sachet (packaged) water to survive” Ms. Ojukwu revealed during the graduation of 20 women in Abuja from the livelihood pathway programme in culinary arts.

She was forced to go and live with the man who raped her. The situation became worse. “He physically abused me till I almost lost the pregnancy at 8 months.” Ms. Ojukwu had to make several trips to the emergency room as a result of the constant battery. She was in labor for two weeks before she had her baby. She returned to her mother’s home after delivery.

From early and forced marriages to physical, psychological, and sexual assault, harmful practices are prevalent in Nigeria, with 43 percent of girls married before the age of 18 according to a 2020 UN Nigeria report on gender-based violence. More empowerment initiatives are needed for survivors like Ms. Ojukwu.

It was while seeking redress against her abuser at an EU-UN supported Spotlight Initiative supported center in Abuja, Nigeria that Ms. Ojukwu heard about the culinary arts training opportunity and enrolled. “This is my second chance,” she remarks.

Ms. Ojukwu’s story is a reminder of why the empowerment of women is so crucial. The Executive Secretary of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Tony Ojukwu, stated that “empowerment is a veritable tool that helps women and girls overcome the trauma of violence inflicted on them”.

The livelihood pathway graduation programme was held on Friday 26th March to send off 20 women who completed their diploma degrees in culinary arts training from Reddish Chronicles

Culinary School with support from the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Nigeria.

The ceremony brought together government, representatives from the National Human Rights Commission, EU, and UN to further promote women's empowerment and freedom from all forms of violence in the country.



The Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Princess Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire, agreed that women’s empowerment should be a primary focus for relevant authorities because of their crucial role in nation-building. She lauded the Spotlight Initiative for providing a source of livelihood for the women.

The UNDP Nigeria Resident Representative, Mohammed Yaya, wrapped up the event by reiterating the UN’s support for women and girls. “We are committed to giving women and girls a voice to promote their empowerment and freedom from all forms of violence. This livelihood pathway programme is an important step to realizing this and to improving the economic and living standards of GBV survivors in Nigeria”.

Spotlight Initiative: Over 6000 Women And Girls Get Second Chance Education



Safinatu Ibrahim dropped out of school in 2004 when she was still in primary level 5. Her parents could no longer afford the fees, so she began accompanying her mother to the family restaurant where she helped to serve customers - mostly men who would often gawk and make passes at her.

In 2020, a neighbour told her about accelerated second-chance education, which aims to equip women and girls who were unable to finish school with the skills they need to return to formal education. Now a graduate, the 20-year-old is committed to continued learning. “My dream is to go back to school,” she says.

Aisha Adaba, 25, was in a similar situation. She'd never had the chance to go to school and at the age of 18, she was mar-

ried off. To care for her two children, she sold roasted fish in her community. This made her vulnerable to verbal abuse from men, who were her main customers. After one customer tried to rape her, she was afraid to continue her trade. Like Safinatu, she heard about Spotlight Initiative-supported learning and enrolled. Aisha never missed a class.

“This is my second chance,” she said. Now that she’s able to read and write, Aisha is also making plans to return to school.

Safinatu Ibrahim is excited to continue her education.

Aisha and Safinatu represent just two of 10.5 million children who are out of school in Nigeria, according to a UNICEF report on education. When girls are out of school, it increases their vulnerability to early marriage, violence and other harmful practices.

The Spotlight Initiative, through UNESCO, launched the Accelerated Second Chance Education Programme right before the onset of COVID-19 last year. While the pandemic meant many girls were unable to go to school, the programme ensured that women and girls were able to keep learning remotely via radio.

The programme offers basic literacy skills; sexual, reproductive health and rights (SHRH) education; and teaches women and girls how to spot violence and where to seek help.

“Today, more than 6000 women and girls across six area councils in Abuja have completed the 6-month learning programme.



Spotlight Initiative



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

Radio Prog. On Violence Against Women And Girls Reach Millions Of Nigerian Hausa Speakers

Kafa damba, a one-hour live interactive (phone-in) programme, started airing on International Women’s Day 2021. With funding from the joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative and contribution of the Sokoto State Broadcasting Corporation, the programme - which means ‘Establishing an End’ - promotes community action to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. Radio has a large audience in Nigeria.

In November 2020, media practitioners, child and gender activists, in a webinar commemorating ‘16 Days of Activism’, discussed the role of the media in promoting ways to end violence against women and girls. During the webinar, it was clear that although the subject of violence against women and girls was not new in the media, the media in the future needs to be engaged in a more strategic way. This means media accountability and advocacy on gender-based issues beyond reportage. This led to a series of advocacy round table meetings with executives from all arms of the media in January 2021. The round table meetings discussed stereotypes in media portrayal of the men and women and programming that investigates government efforts to implement policies to end violence against women and girls.

“The round table discussion with other media executives in Radio and Television created an opportunity for our corporation to implement its corporate social responsibility policy, expand listenership and boost its image publicly. Rima Radio reaches audiences in neighboring Zamfara, Kebbi and Katsina, Jigawa and Kano in the north west; Kaduna, Niger and Plateau in the north central; Lagos in the south west and Cross river and Benin in the south- south”, noted Dr. Saleh Ibrahim, Executive Chairman, Sokoto State Broadcasting Corporation who attended the media round table.

Kafa damba is a product of six weeks of intensive planning between the Spotlight Initiative team at UNICEF and the Sokoto State



Media Corporation. The Executive Chairman, Dr. Saleh Ibrahim, participated in the media advocacy round table discussion with his peers. Subsequently, the corporation is broadcasting “Kafa damba” at 28 per cent reduced cost on both its radio and online platforms. Kafa damba promotes messages that speak to parents, leaders and the general public about prevention, response mechanisms and pathways of addressing and seeking justice for victims and survivors of violence against women and girls in Sokoto State.

The goal of the round table discussions with media executives has paid off. Kafa damba is one of three similar discussion programmes with Women Radio WFM917 on Instagram, and Today’s Woman Magazine on Facebook and YouTube to be broadcast over a period of six months. Kafa damba aired its third episode on Sunday, 21 (month?) 2021. Its reach spans the states of Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi, Katsina, Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna in the North west; Plateau and Niger States in the North Central, and Lagos, Cross River and Benin in the South West and South of Nigeria.

Exploring The Power Of Art To End Violence Against Women And Girls

“My mates and I used to play under the shade of the big trees at the village arena,” recalls artist Ukie Ogonnia. “While others playfully ran around chasing one another, I would sit in a corner, doodling in the sand.”

The winner of the Sheroes art competition has fond memories of his village but understands that the young girls in his community often had a very different experience of childhood. He was raised in the southeast region, which has the country’s third highest rate of female genital mutilation (FGM), according to National Orientation Agency (NOA). His award-winning artwork is a depiction of this act.

Ukie’s work ‘Never Again’ has won first prize in the Spotlight Initiative Nigeria art competition and shows a woman holding a girl down on banana leaves in preparation for FGM. The girl is shouting for help and struggling to break free. “It was always painful for me to watch parents offer their female children for genital mutilation in the name of circumcision because it was regarded as culture,” says Ukie.

Ukie received his award in tandem with the launch of the Spotlight Initiative Virtual Barometer to mark International Women’s Day 2021. The Virtual Barometer will be used to track sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) response across Nigeria.

The event brought together government representatives, including the First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Ms. Aisha Buhari, The Honorable Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation Mr. Abubakar Malami, The Honorable Minister of Women Affairs Dame Pauline Tallen, Minister of State for Budget and National



Ukie Ogonnia portrays Female Genital Mutilation through his art.

Planning, National Assembly, Nigerian Governors’ Wives against GBV, Civil Society Representatives, the EU Ambassador in Nigeria Mr. Ketil Karlsen and the UN Nigeria Resident Coordinator Mr. Edward Kallon.

Mr. Karlsen expressed his happiness about the launch of the Barometer saying, “it will be instrumental in tracking the implementation at the state level of the legislation”. The Honorable Minister for Justice and Attorney General also reaffirmed the mission of the Nigerian government to build a nation where no one is left behind.



UN Boosts Legal Framework For Social Protection In Nigeria

The 'Institutionalising Social Protection For Accelerated SDG Implementation' Project, being implemented by ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, and WFP, and funded by the Joint SDG Fund, is supporting the Government of Nigeria through the technical working group on social protection to strengthen legal framework for Social Protection in Nigeria.

The Government of Nigeria, with the support of the International Labour Organization, has conducted a legal mapping of all existing social protection legislation in Nigeria. The mapping aims to identify the elements and provisions that are needed to achieve universal social protection in Nigeria and provide recommendations on how these can be reflected in the proposed Nigeria Social Protection bill.

Speaking on the importance of a strong legal framework, the Permanent Secretary, Budget and National Planning, Mrs. Olushola Idowu observed, "The COVID 19 pandemic has brought with it an unprecedented need for the institutionalization of Social Protection, and it is essential to provide a strong legal framework through the development of a social protection Bill. I am proud of this joint effort by the technical working group and the ILO to ensure that this purpose is achieved.

The ILO National Project Officer for Social Protection, Mr. Segun Tekun: "Strong social protection systems cannot be achieved without a solid legal framework that ensures universal

coverage for all. The Bill will also clarify individual rights and obligations, enhance the predictability and adequacy of benefits, strengthen institutional capacities, promote transparency and accountability, provide safeguards against corruption and establish a stable and regular funding base.

In Nigeria, social protection has grown to take a prominent role in various national and state-level policy documents, development plans, and budgetary allocations. This is evident with the Nation First National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) adoption, which is currently being reviewed, and since been domesticated by more than 10 states to facilitate implementation at the state level.

Despite the progress recorded, legal reforms in support of the social protection agenda have been lagging. The current laws guiding social insurance and social assistance programmes are not aligned with the comprehensive policy agenda, are of limited scope, and do not take a universal rights-based approach. This has brought challenges in implementation for policymakers and stakeholders, resulting in little growth in coverage numbers and fragmentation of social protection programmes.

To close this huge coverage gap and ensure universal social protection for all individual residents in Nigeria by 2030, the United Nations with the support of Joint SDG Fund, is supporting the Government of Nigeria.

Sokoto State, UN Inaugurate Technical Working Group on Social Protection

Over the years, Sokoto State Government has initiated several social protection interventions implemented by both government's Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs), and non-governmental organizations to address poverty and its related vulnerabilities. However, these interventions were uncoordinated and fragmented due to a lack of a clear policy direction, weak coordination, poor targeting of potential beneficiaries, and limited monitoring and evaluation of these interventions.

To support the government's efforts, a two-day workshop was organized for Sokoto State MDAs with Support from UNICEF on the key concepts of Social protection and harmonizing Social Protection interventions. At the workshop, the Sultan of Sokoto State, represented by the District Head of Kilgari Yabo, Dr. Muhammad Kilgari applauded UNICEF and other donor agencies for complementing efforts towards bringing sanity to the governance. At the conclusion of the workshop, it was resolved that a Technical Working Group (TWG) on Social Protection will be inaugurated after several prior failed attempts.

With support from UNICEF under the Joint SDG funds, the government of Sokoto State formally inaugurated a 28-Member Technical Working Group (TWG) on Social Protection on Friday, March 19, 2021, with the main objective of domesticating and implementation of the National Social Protection Policy in the State.

The policy aims to spearhead the implementation of a well-coordinated sector-wide social protection system to ensure that people can live in dignity through income support, livelihood empowerment, and improved systems of basic services.

This is also in compliance with the recommendation of the Joint National Economic Planning Meeting, where states were man-

The banner features the United Nations logo on the left and the Sokoto State emblem on the right. The text reads: 'SOKOTO STATE MINISTRY OF BUDGET AND ECONOMIC PLANNING In collaboration with the United Nations Joint SDG Programme'. Below this, it says 'WELCOMES YOU ALL TO: INAUGURATION OF STATE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON SOCIAL PROTECTION'. It further states 'To be performed by the Honourable Commissioner MUHAMMAD MAINASARA AHMAD mni Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning'. The event details are: 'Date: Friday 19th March, 2021', 'Venue: Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning Conference Hall', and 'Time: 11:00am prompt'. At the bottom, there is a photo of the Commissioner and a caption: 'HIS EXCELLENCY RT. HON. AMINU WAZIRI TAMBUAL, CFR (WITAWALEN SOKOTO), GOVERNOR, SOKOTO STATE'. Logos for UNICEF and the Joint SDG Fund are also present.

dated to ensure the existence of a TWG on Social Protection as part of the National Strategy to address poverty.

Social protection remains an important tool for addressing poverty, vulnerability, and exclusion. It has proven to be an effective and efficient poverty reduction tool across the developing world in recent decades. The operationalization of Social Protection in Sokoto State will ensure social development by reducing poverty, focusing on improvement in Nutrition, Education, and Health for women and children as envisaged by the Joint Programme.

The Joint Program represents a UN Country Team initiative to accelerate results for the Sustainable Development Goals through social protection efforts. The program is jointly implemented by UNICEF (Lead), UNDP, ILO and WFP.



Social Protection Consultation Goes to States, Records Successes



Following the commencement in late 2019, of the two-year UN joint programme on “Institutionalizing Social Protection for Accelerated SDG Implementation in Nigeria”, the project being implemented by UNICEF, UNDP, WFP and ILO, has focused on strengthening social protection at both the federal and State level in Nigeria.

While the Social Protection System has improved at the Federal level with a reinforced legal framework and a financial mechanism integrated in the national budget and planning efforts, efforts are also on-going at the sub-national level. Already, the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) is operationalized in Sokoto State and this has ensured gender-sensitive social development with reduction in poverty and improvement in Nutrition, Education and Health for women and children.

UNDP as one of the Participating UN Agencies (PUNO) has concluded consultations across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, covering all the 36 states and FCT between December 2020 and March 2021. The most recent and final consultation was carried out in April 2021 in Lagos for the South-Western states.

Some of the success stories from the consultations include:

Oyo State, the following Innovative Financing for Social Protection Programme were achieved: Strengthening of Private Sector Participation in implementing Social Protection; Tourism taxation to finance social protection programmes; Strengthening multi-stakeholders’ participation in the design and implementation of social protection programmes; Exploration of more support from development partners, better coordination of projects and programmes related to social protection as well as open Government initiative for transparency and all-inclusiveness. Other Innovative ideas and quick-win approaches for Social Protection included alternative project financing.

Success story In **Ogun State** include: the Ministry of Budget will now provide the leadership for the inauguration and establishment of the State Technical Working Committee (STWC) on Social Protection; Develop and share with other sister states on ways to develop the State Social Protection Law /Policy; Increase State Government’s investment in Social Protection through the sectoral drive vis a vis the Social Welfare and Well-

being Agenda of the present administration; and Capacity development and waivers for SMEs that engage in businesses with the State concerning procurement requirements.

Others include opportunities anchored on Agriculture such as Ogun Broilers project, FADAMA Guys. To date, Ogun state has over 20,000 beneficiaries of the various schemes while over 70,000 farmers have been registered for different commodity value-chains.

Collaboration with the National government, Donor Agencies/ partners in respect of capacity development and development of social protection law for the State.

Kaduna State is one of the states that has prioritized social protection implementation with innovative financing strategy of a minimum of 1% of the state consolidated revenue allocated for Social Protection yearly.

Sokoto State is a model state in social protection implementation. They has two strategic structures guiding the implementation of social protection which includes; Sokoto State Operation Coordinating Unit (SOCU) and Sokoto State Contributory Healthcare Management Agency (SOICHEMA). These social protection structures has distinguished the state as a blueprint for Social Protection financing and implementation.

Delta State is one of the state that has prioritized social protection implementation with proven innovative financing model. The state has developed Social protection policy which is majority financed from the state annual budget.

Yobe State has also well developed social protection structures like the Yobe State Economic Reform Agenda (YOSERA), which is a 4-year state development Plan and Zakat fund Commission which is domesticated at the emirate councils. These structures has made the state social protection implementation very successful.

Zamfara State is another state that has a well structured social protection implementation strategy. They has 0.2% of its annual consolidated revenue for Zakat which is as an agency developed by the state as a pilot for shock responsive Social Protection intervention.

Kwara State has developed some innovative financing strategy by allocating 1% of the state Internal Generated Revenue (IGR) to Health Insurance. This development has affected the health system in the state positively.

UN Humanitarian Chief Makes Virtual Visit To North-East Nigeria



The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, recently made a two-day virtual visit to north-east Nigeria to get an update on the evolving humanitarian crisis, which is now in its 11th year.

Mr. Lowcock spoke to affected families living in camps and host communities, as well as to humanitarian workers caught in the conflict, to hear their stories and discuss their current needs. Those affected stressed their concerns related to food security, safety and livelihood support, and expressed a deep wish to see peace again.

“We’ve listened very carefully to what families have suffered. My job is to understand the situation on the ground and find how to get more help for these people. I have been in Maiduguri three times in the past three years and am familiar with the situation there. The UN will do what we can to help these families and continue to work with the Nigerian Government to meet the needs of people we are helping in remote places,” Mr. Lowcock said.

During the virtual visit, humanitarian workers also expressed the need to be protected against attacks while delivering life-saving assistance in hard-to-reach and fragile communities.

They told Mr. Lowcock harrowing stories of fear, trauma and loss that they experienced when they were under attack. These events further underscore the need for the world to recognize that attacks on civilians, humanitarian workers and their assets in the region are not only unacceptable, but also unconscionable.

A growing instability

The recent attacks by non-State armed groups in Damasak, where humanitarians were clearly targeted and assets destroyed, have resulted in a temporary suspension of humanitarian operations in Damasak. This has affected the principled delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection to nearly 9,000 internally displaced people and 76,000 people in host communities in Damasak alone.

Amma Alkali, a 66-year-old mother who spoke with Mr. Lowcock, was displaced from Dara Jamal, a village in the Bama local government area, in 2014 in the wake of attacks by non-State armed groups. She fled to Cameroon and lived in the Minawao refugee camp.

A year ago, Amma returned to Maiduguri, in Borno State, in north-east Nigeria, with her 11 children. On their way to Maiduguri, she lost her husband and the eldest son. She is currently living at NYSC camp in Maiduguri. She said she is not ready to return to Bama until the Government provides adequate security, food and shelter support.

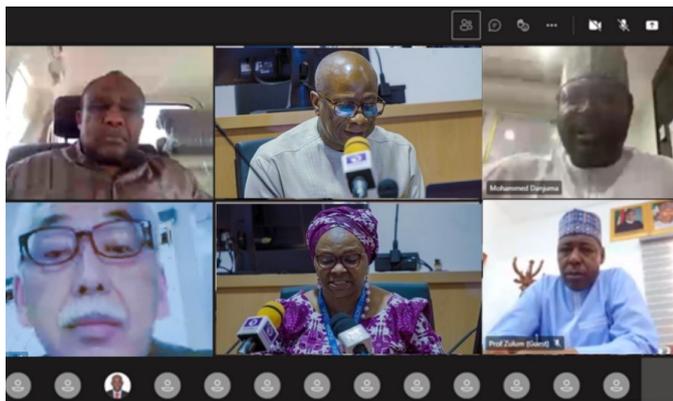
“I provide for 10 children and my husband is not around. I also support my daughter-in-law, who also lost her husband, who was my eldest son. The assistance that we are receiving is not enough. So, if we must return home, the place must be safe for us. Food must be available,” Ms. Alkali said.

The conflict in Nigeria has evolved into a protracted humanitarian crisis with no signs of abating. About 8.7 million people are in need of immediate assistance— more than 5 million of whom are children. The growing instability in north-east Nigeria has an impact beyond the region and is impeding the country’s growth and development potential.

The UN and partners are seeking to raise nearly US\$1 billion this year to help the people in dire need in north-east Nigeria.



Project to Scale up Oxygen Supply and Vaccine Storage Capacity Launched in Borno



Towards strengthening healthcare provision and building resilience of health systems in conflict-affected communities in Borno State, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), in partnership with the Embassy of Japan in Nigeria, Borno State Government, North East Development Commission (NEDC), and Borno State Ministry of Health, has launched a project to scale up Oxygen Supply and Vaccine Storage Capacity in Borno State. With funding from the Government of Japan, the project titled, “Strengthening the health system in conflict affected and Hard to Reach Areas in Borno State”, will be implemented over a 12-month period starting from 31 March 2021.

His Excellency, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum, the Executive Governor of Borno State, formally launched the project on Tuesday, 13 April 2021, at a virtual event with many stakeholders in attendance.

The project will enable primary healthcare facilities to provide acceptable standards of medical care in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected to directly benefit approximately 7.1M million people within 26 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Borno State, of which 24% are children and approximately 45% are women. Two new oxygen plants will be constructed and equipped within the premises of State Specialist Hospital Maiduguri and Biu General Hospital. In addition, 23 primary health centres within Borno State will be equipped with solar refrigerators to scale up vaccine storage capacity.

Governor Zulum thanked the Government of Japan for the tremendous support that has been rendered to the government and people of Borno State, and “I’m happy to know that the Government of Japan is providing another support through UNOPS to strengthen the healthcare system in Borno State. This is very important especially to our primary health care system because

the insurgency has destroyed many health facilities.” He said and requested that Borno State would like to lead on the process with respect to the institutional arrangement for project implementation.

Earlier in her welcome remarks, Mrs. Ifeoma Charles-Monwuba, Director and Representative of UNOPS Ghana Multi-Country Office (GMCO), emphasised that “UNOPS is well positioned to support the infrastructure development of the North east in line with its mandate and to drive an extensive oxygen response that increase the capacity of health facilities to meet the desperate need for oxygen therapy caused by COVID-19 to save the lives of children with severe pneumonia in Borno State, Nigeria.”

Mr. Shinozawa Takayuki - Chargé d’ Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of Japan in Nigeria hoped that the project, funded by the Government of Japan, would help improve the health situation in Borno State which is in difficult circumstances because of insurgency and the current global health crisis. “Japan will continue to help to enhance the livelihood of people in Borno state and stand by the people of Nigeria, as partner, even in difficult times.” He added.

Mr. Mohammed Goni Alkali, Managing Director of North-East Development Commission stated that the project would complement North-East Development Commission’s on-going drive to bolster the healthcare capacity in the region and efforts to combat the pandemic by ensuring that diagnostic facilities are adequately equipped to handle any future outbreaks of infectious diseases and other health facilities upgraded. He added, “We remain committed to supporting all partners in efforts to improve the wellbeing of the people of the North East.”

Mr. Edward Kallon, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria stated that the project would complement all other interventions of the UN, greatly improve COVID-19 severe case management, build resilience of the health system and also improve emergency healthcare delivery in Borno State.

According to him, Borno State would be better equipped to treat children with respiratory illnesses and respond to COVID-19. “The UN in Nigeria will continue to provide strategic support to the government of Nigeria based on the key competencies and comparative advantages of the collective UN development system,” he said.

Prof. Hussein Isah Marte, the Chief of Staff to the Executive Governor of Borno State and Acting Honorable Commissioner of Health, stated that the scale-up of oxygen supply and vaccine storage capacity in Borno state was timely and highly appreciated. “After the completion of the project, the Ministry and the government of Borno State will ensure that the project is sustained over 50 years.

UNOPS, Government Of Nigeria Sign Host Country Agreement

The Government of Nigeria and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) on Thursday 15 April 2021, signed the Host Country Agreement in Abuja, Nigeria. The ceremony was attended by the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs Nigeria, Mr. Geoffrey Onyeama and the Director and Representative of UNOPS, Ghana Multi-Country Office (GMCO), Mrs. Ifeoma Charles-Monwuba.

The agreement outlines the framework for cooperation between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and UNOPS in Nigeria.

In her remarks, the UNOPS Director stated “We believe this agreement is timely given the increasing presence of UNOPS in Nigeria.

The Host Country Agreement will facilitate UNOPS operations in Nigeria and enable an agile and nimble process”. UNOPS assured the Honourable Minister of its commitments to honour all clauses of the Host Country Agreement.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, representing the Government of Nigeria, noted that the Agreement is for a new development



Minister of Foreign Affairs Nigeria, Mr. Geoffrey Onyeama (right) and Director and Representative of UNOPS, Ghana Multi-Country Office Mrs. Ifeoma Charles-Monwuba

cooperation with initiatives towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals set in the Agenda 2030.

Rebuilding A New Life In The Wake Of Improved Security



Falmata Ali

Before the insurgency began in north-east Nigeria, Falmata Ali was a businesswoman in Banki, a town near the Nigerian and Cameroon border. She was able to provide for her family of four children on her own and was proud to be a role model for women and girls in her community.

When the conflict in the Lake Chad Basin started, Falmata's town was frequently attacked. Lives were lost, properties destroyed and means to generating income were halted. Thousands of people were displaced, and most of Banki was left in ruins.

Falmata recalls what happened: "I was at home. The insurgents entered the town, destroying properties and using extreme violence towards the community. Everyone tried to run to safety. I carried my kids and we fled to Cameroon, with just the clothes on our backs".

Falmata witnessed horrific violence, especially to young girls. Her first son and some relatives were abducted by insurgents. To this day, she still doesn't know what happened to them.

These direct human tragedies are awful enough, but the cost of conflict also includes the compounding effects of lost opportunities. The once-bustling Banki and this area of north-eastern Nigeria have had a ghastly set-back whose effects will be felt for decades to come.

Where to start when trying to rebuild?

The Nigerian Government with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and generous contributions from the European Union, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom are implementing stabilization activities in an effort to help communities in north-eastern Nigeria build back better. These interventions are providing timely support, with the aim of achieving the stabilization of conflict affected communities, by restoring effective security, improving the delivery of basic services and livelihoods and the revival of the local economy.

In Banki, these measures include the rehabilitation of security facilities, construction of a protection wall, provision of livelihood opportunities through the cash for work activities, provision of business start-up grants, rehabilitation of markets and the construction of learning spaces and children's recreational centre.

These efforts are working. Banki is beginning to become safer, and the community is starting to return. Falmata and her family have now returned and are living in the IDP camp. Falmata explains what she faced:

"When I returned, the town was in ruins. I ran to see my old properties; everything had been burnt to the ground. I was devastated. I did not know where to begin, but I had to be strong and try to provide for my kids."

Falmata feels safer in the IDP camp, with its new perimeter wall that protects the town from the insurgents. Before the wall, Falmata and her family would sleep in the empty market stalls as they felt safer there than in their own homes. Now, they sleep at home, even feeling safe enough to go out and get water and food even when it gets dark.

She also is a proud member of a new community-level stabilisation committee that gives a voice to women and brings their wisdom to further stabilization work:

"Women and girls are hit really hard by conflict. My role is to present their concerns and issues to the committee, where good solutions and recommendations then happen. The committee helps us look out for each other and helps us to highlight the important security issues women and girls face. We're now working together to rebuild a strong and stable community".

The Regional Stabilization Facility intervention is laying a long-term recovery path for conflict affected areas. Banki a town once vacated due to insurgency is gradually flowing with human activities once again. As there is still much to be done, the stabilization effort is a starting point in achieving total stability and recovery in years to come.

UN Launches New Prison Reform Programme in Nigeria



Dr. Oliver Stolpe, Country Representative of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime addressing participants at the launch of a new Prisons Project in Abuja

With funding from the Government of Germany, the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) launched a new project aimed at fostering the rehabilitation and social reintegration prospects of alleged Boko Haram (BH) associates in detention.

Opening the launch event, the Acting Controller-General of the Nigerian Correctional Service, John Mrabure, stated that “it is heartwarming that this phase of support is geared towards strengthening the capacity of the Correctional Service to rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders alleged to be affiliated with terrorist organisations. There is no gainsaying that this intervention will go a long way in enhancing the technical depth and optimal functionality of the Service’s de-radicalization programme.”

The Acting Director of the Administration of Criminal Justice and Reforms Department under the Federal Ministry of Justice, Leticia Ayoola-Daniels, concurred that “this initiative constitutes a major step forward in our collective goal to support the Nigerian Correctional Service in its efforts to comply with the core provisions of the Nelson Mandela Rules by improving prison security, safety and the humane treatment of inmates”.

With its focus on Maiduguri Maximum Security Prison in Borno State, the project will target a region which continues to be particularly affected by the insurgency, including a severe impact on

the correctional system. More than 1,200 suspected Boko Haram associates are currently held in Maiduguri Maximum Security Prison, the vast majority of whom continue to be held on remand. Next to the extended periods of pre-trial detention and poor socio-economic backgrounds, the stigma associated with being perceived to have been associated with Boko Haram aggravates the obstacles that these detainees will face when trying to re-build their lives in the community.

The project will therefore put an emphasis on strengthening the social reintegration prospects of this particular category of prisoners, including by enhancing their access to education, vocational training, recreational activities and other support services. This aspect will be complemented by infrastructural support and capacity-building measures for corrections officers with a view to improve prison conditions and to further strengthen NCoS’ overall compliance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules).

As such, UNODC’s project will not only respond to the Abuja Declaration on the Treatment of Violent Extremist Offenders (2016), but also contribute to the practical application of the revised Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019) and its “enhanced focus on corrections and promotion of reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. The Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Correctional Reform and Decongestion under the Federal Ministry of Justice, the Honourable Justice I.U. Bello, reiterated his support to the project “as it reinforces the current national advocacy for a paradigm shift from the traditional concept of prison administration.”

As part of UNODC’s Global Programme on Addressing Prison Challenges, the project will benefit from UNODC’s vast experience of providing technical assistance and advisory services to prison and correctional systems in more than 50 countries worldwide, including on the specialized topic of countering violent extremism in prison settings.

Nigeria Unveils National Drug Control Master Plan 2021-2025

The Government of Nigeria, with funding from the European Union and Support from UNODC, has implemented the project, “Response to Drugs and Related Organized Crime in Nigeria”, and organized a side event during the 64th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The new National Drug Control Master Plan (NDCMP) for the period 2021-2025 was presented at the event.

The NDCMP 2021-2025 is the outcome of two years of coordinated, collaborative, and multi-agency effort comprising experts from all the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) as well as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Developed with the technical support from UNODC, the NDCMP is a results-based strategic planning tool for coordinating interventions against illicit drug use and trafficking and related organized crime in Nigeria. The Plan contains four strategic pillars: Supply Reduction; Drug Demand Reduction; Access to Controlled Medicines for Medical and Scientific Purposes; and Governance and Coordination. Each of the strategic pillars is anchored in one or two MDAs of the Government that will be responsible for achieving desired outcomes.

The main goal of the NDCMP 2021-25 is to contribute to improved health and security for all Nigerians by adopting a broad-based, comprehensive, and inclusive approach to drug control issues.

Speaking during the event, the Chairman of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) Brig. Gen. Mohamed

Buba Marwa (Rtd), OFR said: “The NDCMP 2021-2025 represents a continuity and advancement in the Government of Nigeria’s efforts towards addressing the evolving drug situation in the country in a comprehensive, balanced, human-rights centred and gender responsive manner”. He further stated that the Plan “focuses on drugs not only from law and order perspectives but also as a public health and education issue”.

In his remarks, H.E. Ambassador Ketil Karlsen, Head of the EU Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS reiterated the EU’s long-standing commitment to Nigeria in tackling drug control as evidenced by its significant 34 million Euro contribution towards a project focused on supporting the Government of Nigeria in responding to drug control issues in a balanced, and evidence-based manner. He further highlighted the importance of data collection and increased engagement with national partners for developing effective, transformative, and broad-based drug control policies and strategies. The Ambassador also referred to the role that NDLEA has played in the drafting of the NDCMP and stressed the need for proper implementation in the future.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC, Country Representative in Nigeria, Mr. Oliver Stolpe stressed the strong evidence-based of the NDCMP. He stated: “The Plan took inspiration and guidance from a number of research studies on drug control in Nigeria, including the Drug Use Survey 2018, as well as best practices from other parts of the world” He further stated that the Plan.... can be a model for other African states.”

Bauchi State Inaugurates Technical Committee For The Implementation Of VAPP Law



Executive Governor of Bauchi State, Sen. Mohammed Bala officially launching the CMAP in Bauchi State. Photo: UN Women/Olanrewaju Faremi

UN Women and the UK Government in partnership with the Bauchi State Government launched the Costed Model Action Plan (CMAP) and Inaugurated a technical and advisory committee to implement the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law in Bauchi State, this launch took place on the 30th of April 2021.

With Bauchi, being the first state in the North East geopolitical zone to domesticate the VAPP Act, the current political commitment to addressing violence against women by the Bauchi State Government, as well as other policy developments around advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in Bauchi State, provides a strategic opportunity to pilot the establishment of a costed model action plan to enhance the effective implementation of the VAPP Act.

At the launch, Bauchi State Executive Governor, Mohammed Bala said that Bauchi was the first state to domesticate the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in the North-east part of the country, pointing out that the implementation of the VAPP law can only be made possible when political will is supported by targeted funding and other resources.

“Through the costed Model Action plan and the implementation of VAPP law in the state, the government has identified intervention strategies that would have a direct impact on the lives and welfare of the most vulnerable persons in Bauchi state. CMAP is a tool that

will help produce results through clearly defined activities and targets by careful costing and Identification of the actors responsible for the successful implementation of the programme and I welcome the publication of the CMAP for implementation of the VAPP law in Bauchi state.” he said.

The Deputy Representative, United Nations Women, Lansana Wonneh, in his address said the VAPP law represents the core value of the United Nations lamenting that the domestication of the law at the federal level, the process has been very slow across the 36 states of the country.

“This, therefore, means that the process of preventing all forms of violence and discrimination against vulnerable people and every citizen of Nigeria, has not been realised in many parts of Nigeria. However, with the COVID-19 crisis, we also realised that there are increasing levels of violence, particularly the gender-based violence faced by women and girls, and that is precisely the entry point for UN Women,” Wonneh stated.

FCDO Representative Sophie Stevens in her remarks commended the Bauchi State Government on this huge step they have embarked on.

“We believe this sets a foundation for transformational work, for which Bauchi State is embarking on. The Women, Peace and Security agenda, as well as women’s rights are global priorities for the United Kingdom. At a time of alarming insecurities in Nigeria, it is important to say No to violence in all its form. That is why this work for us is so exciting and I believe this CMAP has the potential to transform many lives in Bauchi State and Beyond”.

Speaking at the event, the Speaker Bauchi State House of Assembly, Abubakar Suleiman said that the increasing cases of rape and violence against persons in the state and the nation at large, calls for swift action of the implementation of the VAPP law, adding that the law, which was passed by the State House of Assembly and assented to by the state governor, was because of agitations for the protection of persons against all forms of violence.

Chairperson of the Advisory Committee is the First Lady, Hajija Aisha Bala Mohammed.

Placing Gender At The Center Of Security Sector Reforms In Nigeria

Progress made, but still a long way to go in implementation of the UNSCR 1325

Nigeria is signatory to several commitments on women, peace, and security, as well as gender responsive and gender balanced security sector more specifically. UN Security Council Resolution on Women Peace and Security 1325 (2000), domesticated in Nigeria through a National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 is a key one. In response to these commitments, there have been various policy and programmatic initiatives by security institutions and related ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), partners, and civil society. However, progress and implementation has been uneven across and within security sector institutions.

It’s against this backdrop that UN Women supported the convening of the first Security Sector Reference Group meeting on UNSCR 1325 for 2021. The meeting was aimed at adopting the annual workplan for the Group, getting updates from the members of their various gender related initiatives and priorities for the year, validating a gender training manual for security sector personnel and providing inputs from the security sector to the development of the 3rd Nigerian NAP.

The meeting was graced by Minister of Women Affairs H.E Dame Pauline Tallen, UN Women Country representative Com-

fort Lamptey (virtually) among other key stakeholders in the security sector institutions.

‘Security is an issue that affects all of us. We all know that women and children are the worst hit by insecurity, disasters and most recently the COVID 19 pandemic. This brings to the fore, the crucial element of collaboration among various actors’ remarked H.E Dame Pauline K Tallen, OFR, KSG, Ministry of Women Affairs. She reiterated the vital support needed at all levels. The Minister stated that the Ministry of Women Affairs is not a stand-alone but at the center of the nation’s development.

In her message of Goodwill, Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Country Representative said, ‘This platform would allow exchange of experiences and good practice through gender structures of various institutions, collate data and assess overall performance of the gender responsiveness of the security sector. We expect that this year the group will achieve much more as it consolidates its membership and ways of working’.

The consultation was attended by representatives of various security institutions (including Nigerian Police Force, Army, Air force, Navy, Immigration Service, and Customs Service among others), oversight agencies, and civil society organizations working on security.

Nigeria Begins Exploratory Dialogues On The UN Food Systems Summit, Organises 12 Dialogues In Six Geo-Political Zones



The Federal Government of Nigeria in collaboration with the United Nations and State governments, has commenced the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) exploratory dialogues at the sub-national level. The dialogues, numbering 12 across the six geo-political zones of the country, started on Tuesday 6 April 2021 with Lagos, Kwara and Imo States, while the rest will hold on 7 and 8 April.

In her opening remarks at the dialogue in Lagos, the National Convenor of Nigeria UN Food Systems Summit Dialogues (UNFSSD), and Permanent Secretary of Budget and National Planning, Mrs Olusola Idowu, noted that there was no better time to hold Food Summit than now that the rate of malnutrition, poverty, hunger, poor human capital development, environmental degradation, climate change, poor land tenure system, poor investment in food production, processing and post harvest losses are on the increase.

The dialogues, therefore, she continued, would offer opportunities "to exchange views on the pathway towards sustainable national food system; and identify intentions and commitments of different food system actors."

Lagos State Governor, H.E. Babajide Sanwoolu, called on everyone to join hands to achieve sustainable food systems in Nigeria and ensure that no one is hungry and none is left behind." He was represented by the Mr Samuel Egube, the Hon. Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget, Lagos State. Hon. Commissioners of Planning and Budget from Ondo and Ogun States also attended the dialogue.

The Federal Government and the UN had in February this year held the national dialogue to kick-start series of dialogues planned for the UN Food Systems Summit. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has convened the UNFSS which is scheduled to hold in September this year.

Research And Innovations, Key To Africa's Development – UN

In strengthening its commitment to promoting youth development through Model United Nations conference in academic institutions in Nigeria, the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Nigeria and the Redeemer's University, Ede Osun State, have organized the first Redeemer's University International Model UN conference (RUIMUN) held both onsite at Ede and online.

Addressing the over 240 delegates from eight universities from Nigeria, United Kingdom, Ghana, and Sierra-Leone at the conference held on 13 – 17 April, the Director of UNIC, Mr. Ronald Kayanja, emphasized that research and innovations are key if the challenges of poverty, unemployment, inequality and climate emergency in Africa must be addressed.

"As I welcome you to this Model United Nations, it can never be business as usual. We have to work more smarter, and harder for our survival as a people. Research and innovations are key, and we cannot always depend others. In Africa, we must develop a strong mentality – to hate begging and dependence on the outside world." He explained.

Earlier, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in a video message to the conference, welcomed the holding of RUIMUN, and acknowledged that RUIMUN conference delegates' "unwavering commitment to international cooperation is essential for tackling the COVID-19 pandemic – the biggest test our world has faced since the Second World War."



According to him, we could only defeat the coronavirus if we do so globally. "We are strongly committed to providing full support to all, guided by our shared values." He added.

The Vice Chancellor of Redeemer's University, Professor Anthony Enisan Akinlo, expressed the commitment of the University to ensuring the success of the institution's first Model UN conference.

The Osun State Governor, Adegboyega Oyetola, represented by the Commissioner for Youth, Sports and Special Needs, Hon. Lawal Azeez Olayemi, expressed his delight at the delegates' confidence, intellect and quality of debates.

The theme of the conference was "Achieving our collective commitment to multilateralism in the new normal."

Vaccinating the vaccinator

A former polio vaccinator - now a volunteer community mobiliser in north-east Nigeria - comes full circle when she receives the COVID-19 vaccine.



Fatima Suleiman

On the day Fatima Suleiman, a 40-year-old volunteer community mobiliser (VCM) in Borno, north-east Nigeria, rolled up her sleeve to receive her first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, dozens of women from the community where she works accompanied her to the clinic.

"They wanted to get the vaccine too," said Suleiman, a widow and mother of eight who works in Maisandari. "But they couldn't because they are not health workers. Vaccination in Nigeria is still for health workers only - but the women made me promise to inform them when general vaccination commences and said that I should be there with them when they receive their first shots. I agreed."

For many people who know Suleiman, the spectacle at the Yerwa Clinic is not surprising. As a former polio vaccinator and roaming health worker, Suleiman has been a part of Maisandari for six years. The VCM promotes the benefits of birth registration, routine immunization as well as ante-natal and post-natal care attendance to women and men.

Suleiman is one of 2,046 community mobilisers engaged by UNICEF to reduce infant and maternal mortality in 101 wards of Borno State. Her weekdays are busy with daily visits to women in homes and to health workers in nearby clinics. Her popularity with children and women have earned her a chieftaincy title from elders of the community, who fondly refer to her as the Maman Yara of Maisandari.

"The title means the 'mother of children'. My most memorable experience as a health worker in Maisandari happened when a woman was experiencing a difficult childbirth at home. She refused to go to the hospital and her neighbours secretly called me to come," said Suleiman.

"I rushed to her house and assisted in the delivery of twin babies. I was able to convince her husband to take her to the hospital after the delivery. It was clear to everyone that the woman and her babies could have died if I was not called," she said. "I thank my community members for their support and getting in touch with me whenever the need arises."

Suleiman says receiving the COVID-19 vaccine at the Yerwa Clinic in Maiduguri is a validation of her belief in the power of immun-

ization to protect children and adults against disease. Prior to becoming a VCM, she had tirelessly combed the streets of Maisandari for months, immunizing children against the deadly poliomyelitis.

She says that receiving the vaccine is both a protection from COVID-19 and a demonstration of her work as a vaccinator and health worker.

"As a VCM, it is expected of me to live by example - that's why I took the vaccine. I also wanted protection from the virus," said Suleiman. "I was not afraid at all to take the vaccine; I was happy that it's available here in Nigeria now. I didn't feel any reaction after taking the vaccine and I encouraged my community members to also take theirs."

A story of resilience

For years now, the health worker has found purpose improving the wellbeing of women and children in and around Maisandari. But like many women in north-east Nigeria, Suleiman has experienced personal and agonizing consequences of armed conflict.

"My husband was killed along the Maiduguri-Damaturu road by non-state armed groups in 2015. He was on his way to Kano when he was abducted and killed. I was left to raise and cater alone for eight children. It has been difficult, but I have accepted his death in good faith," said Suleiman.

"I was a polio vaccinator for two years and then I became a VCM. UNICEF is supporting my colleagues and me with a monthly stipend, and I started a small poultry farm last year to boost my income. All my children are in school and Alhamdulillah (thank God), we are all doing well," she added.

Through her work, Suleiman is contributing to the reduction of deaths from childhood diseases in Maisandari. Aside from household visits, one of her major health promotion tools is the monthly women's meeting she leads in the community.

"It is a forum where we encourage and advise women who are going through challenges. The meeting welcomes widows, divorcees and married women. We raise awareness on health promotion and economic empowerment. We believe women should support their families by generating income, no matter how small," she said.

UN Partners Borno State In Fight Against Leishmaniasis



When Bako Ibrahim, a 25 years old taxi driver resident in Gima village, Konduga Local Government Area (LGA), Borno State, first noticed the sore on his left hand, he treated it with levity thinking he must have injured himself unknowingly. However, when the wound failed to heal and later affected both hands, he decided to seek medical intervention. He was diagnosed with Cutaneous Leishmaniasis, a Neglected Tropical Disease.

“I do not know how I contracted the disease. I saw the sore on my left hand and later both hands, and it was not healing. I went to the hospital, where they told me I have a disease. I have not been able to work in the last eight weeks because of the sore on my hands”, he says.

For Alhaji Yero, a 56-year-old farmer, a resident of Maiduguri LGA two of his children had sores on their faces and hands and also diagnosed with Cutaneous Leishmaniasis.

Alhaji Yero said though the disease was not new to the community, he has no idea how his children contracted it.

“It is not my first time seeing the disease. I have noticed it in my community, but I did not know the name until two of my children were diagnosed with the disease. We had thought it was caused by drinking and bathing with dirty water, but now I know better,” he said.

Leishmaniasis is a Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) caused by bites from sand flies. The phlebotomine sandflies carry the Leishmania parasite and infect humans, causing either skin sores or internal organ damage, respectively. The cutaneous type which affects the skin only is predominantly reported in Nigeria while the visceral type, which is by far more fatal is reported elsewhere.

Essentially, Leishmaniasis is closely associated with poverty, migration, poor sanitation, malnutrition, weak immune system, lack of safe water sources, substandard housing conditions and deficient healthcare access. In the last two years, there have been reported cases in some part of the country, with Borno state recording the highest prevalence of cases.

The disease prevents affected adults and children from going to school, working, or fully participating in community life, contributing to stigma and the cycle of poverty. In Borno state, the high number of cases are associated with the conflict crisis and displacement of people in the region.

In 2019 and 2020, 410 cases and 516 new cases were reported respectively in Borno state. As of January 2021, a total of 220 affected persons, including Bako and Alhaji Yero’s children, have

been identified in 26 communities and received treatment from the Borno State Ministry of Health, with support from the World Health Organization (WHO). The disease affects males and females in equal proportion.

Malam Bako, appreciating the government and WHO, said he is now better and looking forward to going back to work. “Now that I have received treatment, I am fine and looking forward to resuming work. I will like to thank the government and the WHO, that provided timely intervention”.

Health Intervention

To contain the outbreak, WHO supported the Borno State government create awareness in high risk communities on the cause of the disease, the preventive measures and the need for immediate reporting and treatment.

“We have been working with WHO and the state governments to eliminate Leishmaniasis and other NTDs in the country. We have been working on sensitizing and raising awareness about the disease in the communities, improving surveillance, and educating the people about the importance of seeking medical attention”, says Dr Anyaika Chukwuma, the NTD National Coordinator, Federal Ministry of Health.

“The next step is to continually sensitize the people on the importance of using mosquito nets,” he added.

The WHO team supported the State health authorities in training 40 health workers and 60 community announcers in 12 communities to raise awareness and sensitize the people about the prevention of the infection and support case findings and referrals to the teaching hospital.

Also, WHO instituted community testing and treatment centres where infected persons are been treated. Two sentinel sites were also set up in 2 locations, one at the university teaching hospital and the other at the state dermatology health center for continuous surveillance.

Meanwhile, the WHO State Coordinator in Borno state, Dr Isiaka said “despite these laudable efforts, more work is needed by the state health authorities and partners to eliminate NTDs in Nigeria as NGOs hardly work in this area, leaving WHO alone on this.”

Even though, a new organization, Zakinyhe Foundation Centre for Disease Research and Control started working on Leishmaniasis in Adamawa and Yobe states, WHO has pledged its commitment to supporting the government of Borno state to prevent and control disease outbreaks in the State.

“WHO will provide support in additional training of health workers, community sensitization and improved prevention methods against the sand flies.

PHOTO NEWS



Captions, from left to right in a clockwise direction

1. Humanitarian Coordinator of the UN in Nigeria, Mr. Edward Kallon, on Friday, 30 April 2021, handed over 89 Units of houses built by the UN to the Benue State Government to provide temporary shelter to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Guma LGA, as part of efforts to decongest overcrowded IDP camps in the state.
2. To commemorate Earth Day 2021, UNIC in collaboration with Foundation for a Better Environment (FABE) International and Horlag Recycling organized a Beach Clean Up in Okun Ajah a coastal community in Lagos.
3. UNICEF Country Representative, Mr Peter Hawkins (seated right), signs a funding agreement with HIS Towers. To support UNICEF's COVID-19 emergency response in Nigeria, HIS Towers is donating funds, part of which will be used to provide oxygen to government health centres.

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