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## Comfort Lamptey

UN Women Representative  
to Nigeria and ECOWAS

# From the Rep's Desk

## Sustaining Investment in Women's Empowerment

In 2021, despite the challenges and restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN Women Nigeria Country Office continued to implement programmatic, coordination and normative interventions as a contribution to efforts by the Government of Nigeria to close the gender inequality gap and advance the rights of women and girls. UN Women worked to strengthen women's increased and substantive representation in political, economic and social life, including in the humanitarian, peacebuilding and development contexts.

The interventions addressed the low political representation of women in politics by lending technical support to the work of the ongoing constitutional review process, and ahead of the 2023 elections, by supporting the work of civil society organizations and the media to advocate for passage of equality bills that promote the equal representation of women in politics and governance.

The Country Office invested in the economic empowerment of women including through support to women farmers who were provided access to improved farming inputs and post-harvest technologies, whilst conflict-affected women, and other rural women were supported with income generating skills and start-up kits for improving their livelihoods.

UN Women implemented interventions for increasing women's effective participation in peace and security processes; including for the

adoption of policy measures to build gender-sensitive security sector institutions, supporting networking and joint strategizing among women in security sector institutions and improving public perceptions of women's role in peace and security.

Our work with partners in Nigeria also recorded tremendous changes in the trends for the protection of women and girls against gender-based violence (GBV) and harmful practices, as well as in the delivery of life-saving services to GBV survivors. Advocacy actions by women's movements, civil society organizations and gender advocates, community members, religious leaders, and traditional rulers, to prevent and respond to GBV also increased. We also expanded partnerships to include non-traditional voices from Nollywood in the fight to end gender-based violence.

This edition of Newsletter captures the impact of strategic projects and activities executed by UN Women Nigeria, in partnership with the Nigerian government and relevant agencies. It also documents the 2021 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence..

We thank all our partners for the impactful collaboration and sustained efforts to promote gender equality and women's rights in Nigeria.



UN Women Nigeria Country Representative, Ms. Comfort Lamptey (left) receiving the award from Honourable Minister Pauline Dame Tallen at the 21st National Council for Women Affairs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

## National Council Of Women Honors UN Women Country Representative

*Presenting the award, Honorable Tallen commended Ms. Lamptey for her commitment and support for activities of the Federal Ministry of women affairs in relation to women, children, and vulnerable groups, especially the girl child.*

UN Women Nigeria's Country Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ms. Comfort Lamptey, on August 26, 2021, received an excellence award from the National Council on Women Affairs for championing the issues of women, children and persons with disabilities.

The award was conferred on Ms. Lamptey by the Honorable Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen at the 21st National Council Meeting on Women Affairs under the theme, "Gender Equality: A Panacea for Enduring Security and Sustainable Economic Recovery in the Post COVID -19 Era" in Uyo Akwa Ibom state.

The National Council on Women Affairs Meeting, an annual event rotated amongst states of the federation and a platform spear-headed by the Ministry of Women Affairs this year assembled all stakeholders to discuss issues affecting the devel-

opment and welfare of women, girl child, and the disadvantaged. In attendance, minister, state governors, inter-national partners and civil society organizations deliberated on adopting the policy of inclusiveness for women at all levels.

Presenting the award, Honorable Tallen commended Ms. Lamptey for her commitment and support for activities of the Federal Ministry of women affairs in relation to women, children, and vulnerable groups, especially the girl child.

In her response, Ms. Comfort Lamptey expressed her appreciation to the ministry and all stakeholders for their collaboration with UN Women leading to the mention of a gender-responsive budgeting for the first time in the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning 2022 Budget Call Circular. She further dedicated the award to all Nigerian women describing them as resilient.



Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Representative to Nigeria and the ECOWAS, speaking at the Media Breakfast  
Photo: UN Women/ Anthony Abu

## Step in the right direction as Media backs Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill process

**A**s Senator Biodun Olujimi and women's groups – with support from UN Women, intensify advocacy for the passage of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, Media Executives and the Press have expressed their support and commitment to advocate for the passage of the auspicious bill.

There is a considerable gender gap in Nigeria, where women make up only 3.8% of elective offices across the state and national level, and only 16% representation in appointive positions at the national level. The situation is adverse with the inadequate investment in primary health care for women, the high rate of violence against women, unequal economic opportunities, and unfavourable policies and laws.

Like an uphill task, activists and gender advocates in Nigeria have pushed for the passage of different versions of equal opportunities bills for two decades. The recent version – the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill – has overcome several hurdles. Still, women groups and activists have kept their feet on the gas, navigating dishes of outright chauvin-

ism, harmful traditional practices, moral and religious misconceptions, and low political will.

On Tuesday September 28, 2021, media executives and reporters declared support and commitment to promoting the passage of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill at a Media Breakfast Meeting organised by the Office of Senator Biodun Olujimi, with support from UN Women Nigeria and the Australian High Commission to Nigeria. The declaration of support and commitment to the passage of the bill is strategic because history has proven that the media can influence political events and lawmaking processes.

Media attention can generate policy attention to public problems; the media can create a sense of urgency at parliaments and amplify the voices of the masses.

Media's declaration of support for the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill boosts ongoing advocacy efforts for the passage of the bill. It is also timely as the bill is pending a close second reading.

*As Senator Biodun Olujimi and women's groups intensify advocacy for the passage of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, Media Executives and the Press have expressed their support and commitment to advocate for the passage of the auspicious bill.*

"As we march towards to final point, we hope your (media) - support, buy-in and cooperation that we will be able to build and sustain a strong strategic alliance, as jointly we mobilise public support to ensure a successful Second Reading", said Senator Bio-dun Olujimi, Lead Sponsor of the bill.

According to the Australian High Commissioner to Nigeria, H.E. John Donnelly, "Gender and equal opportunity is not the right thing to do but the smart thing to do".

**T**he Gender and Equitable Opportunities Bill otherwise known as the GEOB has the national interest at heart with provisions to fast track the domestication of the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, CEDAW which Nigeria signed in 1985. The bill seeks to also enable effect to be given to certain aspects and provisions of CEDAW and the African charter on human and people's rights on the rights of women in Africa. Simply put, to ensure that women in Nigeria do not suffer indignities, disrespect and discrimination just because they are women and have equitable opportunities to benefit from the nation as citizens without obstacles that are steeped in negative tradition and cultures.

Interestingly, Nigeria as a nation went into an international arena and signed that the women of Nigeria will be protected. Since the signing, women of Nigeria still do not have the cover to protect them from drinking the water washed off their husband's corpses once their husbands die and Nigerian girls still do not have equitable opportunities to education like Nigerian boys. Healthwise, the number of women dying from child-birth remains one of the highest in the world.

According to the World Health Organisation, the lifetime risk of a woman dying from child-birth or pregnancy related complications is 1 in 22 while in developed countries it is 1 in 4,900 (2020) This gives stark reality to the many challenges women face in Nigeria. The GEOB prohibits discrimination against women and adopts the same definition of discrimination as CEDAW as both intentionally discriminatory acts and acts that have the effect of discrimination.

*Cont'd on page 4*

## Understanding the Gender and Equitable Opportunities Bill

Three years ago, I sat in a hall full of young girls, school children, dignitaries and stakeholders when a young girl stepped forward to speak to all of us. She was about 15 years old and out of school. As she spoke, she brought many persons, men and women to tears. She spoke in a Nigerian language in a crisp clear, strong voice. She wanted to be a doctor she said but she was not sure how that was going to be possible since she was a house help and has been for a year. Her salary is paid by her employer directly to her father who uses part of the money to send her younger brother to school and the other half to look after his family. Her story was gut wrenching.

In breaking down the Gender and Equitable opportunities bill, it is imperative to itemize some of the things it proposes to do to help women in agreement with not only the Nigerian constitution but with other important international instruments for protecting the rights of women. The bill calls for among other things

- a. Elimination of gender stereotyping by stating clearly that both men and women are equitable before the law.
- b. Elimination of cultural practices and prejudices that define one group as superior while another group is inferior
- c. Special measures to give women opportunities to participate in political and government leadership by giving special percentages to women to push them further in leadership positions in Nigeria. These measures include but are not limited to women being given 35% of appointive and elective positions wherever they exist.
- d. Elimination of discrimination against women in health care services especially in the provision of maternal health care
- e. Guardianship and custody of children by a widow after the death of her husband except

- f. this is contrary to the welfare of the children
- f. Elimination of inhuman, degrading and humiliating treatment of widows.
- g. Elimination of gender-based violence
- h. Elimination of discrimination in employment, promotion and scholarships especially as it relates to women
- i. Provision of access to technology, formal and informal employment and education for women and men in the rural areas.
- j. Provision of credit and agricultural loans to women equitably with men
- k. Fair and equitable inheritance rights for both women and men.
- l. Establishment of an equitable opportunities commission to monitor the implementation of the bill
- m. Declaration of any form of discrimination as an offence with consequences if convicted to include jail term and /or fine for the offence.

For a nation that signed that it will protect her women, this outlook of the proposed bill which takes cognisance of Nigerian family values calling for non-discrimination in the upbringing of children, recognition of the role of both parents in the upbringing and development of children and a proper understanding of maternity as a social function, it is sad that this bill has been facing obstacles since it began its journey. For political leadership, the recruitment drive for women to join political parties and contest increased in 2019 but the numbers elected decreased from previous years.

The journey of the bill since it was first presented by Senator Chris Anyanwu in 2010 to its representation by Senator Biodun Olujimi in 2019 has been chequered and represents as the coalition of NGO puts it, the unfortunate place in which the nation places her women.

The passage of the bill will give Nigeria a boost in the committee of nations and give women the leeway to participate actively in National development while protecting them from harmful traditional practices which will prevent them from contributing their quota to Nigeria's development.

There is no doubt that many Nigerians will be happy to see their daughters go to school, receive scholarship, see their sisters get access to agricultural credit and trading loans and see their wives receive promotion and good employment while their cousins in the rural areas, women and men get a chance at a better life.

The bill is easy to understand if one puts it in the box of an improved society where women are better able to look after themselves, have a voice, participate in decision making, contribute to National development while socialising a healthier and more wholesome family.



## Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill Does Not Contradict Our Religious or Cultural Beliefs

Participants pledge their commitment to advocate passage of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill at the event. Photo: UN Women/ Anthony Abu

“I am convinced that culture and religion are used to maintain the status quo, the discrimination against women and girls. I know the GEOB is not in contradiction with my cultural and religious beliefs,” professed a group of men with their right hands raised. These influential men from various sectors committed to advocating for the passage of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill at The Men’s Conversation.

The Men’s Conversation was organized by Women’s Radio Station WFM 91.7 on 15 November 2021, with support from UN Women Nigeria. The objective of The Men’s Conversation, which was broadcast live, was to explore men’s perspectives on the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, clarify assumptions and sociocultural misconceptions around the bill, and mobilize men’s support for its passage.

Participants included male technocrats, gender experts, activists, and social workers from government bodies, civil society organizations, and development partners. Among them were Prof. Mustapha Hussain Ismail, Executive Director, Centre for Human Rights in Islam; Eng. Adebisi Olufunso, FNSE, Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs; Dr Hussaini Abdu, Country Director, CARE International; Samson Itodo, Executive Director, YIAGA Africa

and convener of #NotTooYoungToRun; representative of Dr Otovie Igbuzor, Chief of Staff to the Deputy Senate President, Dr Itia C. Otabor; Opeyemi Oriniowo, a development specialist; Jide Ojo, a public affairs commentator; and others.

In 2016, the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill was rejected by the National Assembly on the argument the bill is not compatible with Nigerian culture and religious beliefs. Activists and gender experts argued that this was a misconception. However, since then, the bill has undergone revisions. The current version had its first reading at the Nigerian Senate, with anticipation of an imminent second reading.

Prof. Mustapha Hussain Ismail mentioned that the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill aims to address myriad forms of injustice against women and girls, some of which are addressed in the Quran. He assured listeners that the bill does not contradict Islamic tenets and should be embraced as a tool for social justice. He further committed to promoting passage of the bill using “relevant scriptures in the Quran to clear the misconceptions around the bill”.

“We are incomplete as human beings without the liberation and participation of the other half of the society; therefore, the strug-

gle for the passage of the bill is the struggle for liberation of oneself,” Dr Kole Shettima, Director of MacArthur Foundation West Africa, asserted as he urged men to support the passage of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill.

The Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, Eng. Adebisi Olufunso, FNSE, stated that when society denies women their rights or certain positions, the economy of the country suffers. He reiterated that gender equality is a development issue.

The participants committed to offering their platforms and networks to create awareness about the benefits of the bill and advocate its passage. The consensus was that the content of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill does not contravene religious or cultural beliefs; fundamentally, it advocates equal opportunity for all and is a precursor for economic development.

A queue of women has formed at a secondary school in Ajaokuta, Kogi State. Seated at a desk in front of the women are officials of the Nigeria Girl Guides Association (NGGA) who have come to register them on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) online Continuous Voters Registration (CVR) portal.

"I've come to register so I will be able to vote in the coming elections. And so that when a woman comes out to contest, I will be able to vote for her," said Khadijat Abubakar, a trader in Kogi State, as she waited to collect the printout of her online registration.

Khadijat Abubakar is one of thousands of women being registered online by NGGA, with support from UN Women and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), as part of the Continuous Voters Registration programme by INEC. Ahead of the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, INEC commenced CVR nationwide in June 2021. The exercise, which will continue till June 2022, is being conducted physically and online, although the online process requires visiting an INEC office to finalize the process.

Registering online fast-tracks the process of registration and collection of the voter's card. To improve women's participation in the CVR, UN Women, in collaboration with NGGA and The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) is sensitizing and mobilizing women to register. This is to ensure that more women are eligible to participate in the upcoming elections.

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## Mobilizing Women for Continuous Voters Registration in Nigeria

*Victoria Toluhi, NGGA State Commissioner for Kogi State (right), Ayo Mohammed, National Education Commissioner for the Nigeria Girls Guides Association (Second right), and other staff during one of the online Continuous Voters Registration drives for women in Lokoja, Kogi State.*

This initiative is strategic because most women in rural areas have limited access to computer facilities and may not be able to take advantage of online registration.

NGGA is conducting the online CVR registration drive in selected states in all the geopolitical zones of Nigeria. These states include Benue, Kogi, Borno, Sokoto, Edo, Ekiti, and Ebonyi. INEC manages the registration portal and monitors the registrations.

It is important to note that decades after Nigeria's independence, there is still a huge gender gap in governance, leadership, and political participation, both in elected and appointed positions. At the federal level, women's representation at the National Assembly is about 4 per cent.

A report by the National Bureau of Statistics shows that in 2018, women's representation in State Houses of Assemblies was only 5 per cent. Only 15 per cent of deputy governors are women, and a female governor has never

been elected in Nigeria. At the local government level, the number of women is still low.

There were only 7 women in 43 ministerial appointments in 2019 – women made up only 16 per cent of the appointments. In the states and local governments, women's representation in appointed positions is also low.

One of the strategies that would improve women's representation in leadership and political participation is women translating their population size and using their voting power to increase the number of women in leadership positions. Two things become important – first, ensure women have their voter's card and, second, ensure they are sensitized on strategic political participation within political parties and during elections. These are the objectives of the ongoing CVR efforts.

NGGA has deployed its personnel to different local governments in selected states to register women online. This was often preceded by engagements with gatekeepers of communities, to edu-

cate them on the objectives and expected outcomes of the initiative. There were advocacy visits to traditional leaders and district heads, who subsequently mobilized women to participate in the online registration exercise. The women who were registered were issued printouts; with this, they can collect their voter's card at the local INEC office.

"What we are doing here is to make sure that all the women and young women have their voter's cards so that they can come out and vote. We have brought the online CVR registration closer to them," said Ayo Mohammed, National Education Commissioner for NGGA.

# Supporting Women Entrepreneurs through Value Chain Addition in Nigeria



Auntie J displays her products at a Shea Butter exhibition in Abuja.  
Photo: UN Women/ Faith Bwibo

**U**N Women collaborates with several partners to implement the project 'Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment Through Climate-Resilient Agribusiness in Nigeria' in Ebonyi and Niger states. These partners include the Standard Bank Group, as Stanbic IBTC, FAO, UNIDO and International Labour Organization (ILO), the Governments of Ebony and Niger States (through the respective ministries of agriculture and women affairs), the Niger State Commodity and Export Promotion Agency, the National Shea butter Producers Association, and Food For All International (FFAI).

Women cooperatives from three project local government areas (LGAs) including women entrepreneurs working on shea butter agri-business associations selected to benefit from project interventions in Niger State. UN Women collaborated with Government counterparts and the state chapter of the National Shea Products Association of Nigeria (NASPAN) in Niger state trained about 200 women in cooperatives and entrepreneurs on product re-branding, product

certification and catalogue for international markets. This has increased beneficiary's product's value, demand, and sale on the shea butter value chain.

Rabya, a university graduate resorted to set up her own business after her search for employment was futile. Her company Teerab specializes in making body balms, hair creams and oils, organic shampoo, and body soaps.

She narrated at her booth during the 3- day Nigeria National Shea Exhibition in October 2021, 'With my bachelors' degree, I knew I could start my own venture to support my family. I came for training for 6 weeks for certification in Value chain addition. 'I have attended workshops and seminars organized by UN Women that have improved my knowledge on value addition to Shea. I also use my time to researching organic products, marketing, packaging'.

She urged women to keep improving themselves through continuous learning.

200 women entrepreneurs from 6 cooperatives in Niger State were trained on improved skills and technologies for processing various shea butter products including high-quality soaps and other varieties of cosmetics, and on enhanced branding of products to meet both the local and international markets standards.

Auntie J used to sell raw shea butter and is one of the 200 women entrepreneurs trained on shea butter processing into different cosmetic products.

'I used to sell raw Shea Butter, then I improved to start processing the shea butter into cream, bar soap, oil, shampoo among other products. Since my eight years of doing business,

the training provided by UN Women was one of the best for my enterprise. We are looking forward to receiving the machines that will assist with processing and linkage to more markets. I am thankful as this business has helped me support my husband and family.'

Through the interventions of the project support, the Niger and Ebonyi States governments reviewed their agricultural policies from a gender perspective, which has created the enabling environment for women's access to lands and other productive agricultural resources in the two states.

"Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture" is a multi-country initiative of UN Women, which is funded by Standard Bank Group. It is implemented by UN Women and seeks to close the gender gap in agricultural productivity and incomes by increasing access to productive resources and markets for 17 women small-holder farmers organizations and agribusiness groups engaged in the rice and shea nuts value chains.

The project activities are implemented in Niger and Ebonyi States, where women dominate the shea nuts, and rice value chains, respectively; and it supports 12,500 rural women as direct beneficiaries of the interventions.



Group Photo of participants at the WISCAR Private Sector Leaders Forum. Photo: UN Women/ Faremi Olanrewaju

## UN, WISCAR Call for Private Sector's Recommitment To Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs)

The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) has been on the margins of engagements and commitments by private sector organizations in Nigeria. However, it is finally beginning to gain ground and recognition.

Under the Spotlight Initiative in partnership with Women in Successful Career (WISCAR), UN Women executed a Private Sector Leaders Forum on the Women's Empowerment Principles. Introducing the WEPs to private sector leaders, Executive Director of WISCAR Ms Fabia Ogunmekan stated that empowering women across all sectors of the economy is crucial to building a resilient and just economy. That is why the WEPs - a joint initiative of the United Nations Global Compact and UN Women was established to empower women in the Workplace, the Marketplace, and the Community.

Founder and Chairperson of WISCAR, Mrs Amina Oyagbola, in her opening remarks, emphasized the need for private sector leaders to commit to the WEPs, "Today's forum provides you and your organization an opportunity to gain a clearer understanding of why you should seriously con-

sider becoming a signatory to the UN Women & UN United Nations Global Compact - Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) and champion this cause".

Asks to participating companies was to sign up to the WEPs, as this would accelerate the achievement of the SDG5 before 2030. Those who are already WEP signatories continue to initiate and implement policies that achieve gender equality and women's empowerment across their organizations.

In her goodwill message, UN Women Country Representative to Nigeria Ms. Comfort Lamptey said, "credit to the private sector in Nigeria, as many women are in positions of senior leadership, we see this as a real opportunity to transform the state of the representation in Nigeria's leadership - to make it more inclusive of women's perspectives and demonstrated capacities". Ms. Lamptey stated that she believes the private sector is in a unique position to influence national policies that ensure women's rights and development, including the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill (GEOB), which UN Women is supporting. The event drew over 25 stake-

holders for this engagement, such as General Electric, Stanbic IBTC Bank, Wema Bank, First Bank, Shell, Accion Microfinance Bank, Coca Cola, Business Day, Airtel, TVC News, Schneider Electric, Union Bank, Total, PZ Cussons and a host of other companies.

Participants stated how their organizations embed gender-inclusive and friendly policies into their business operations, such as the introduction of maternity leaves, mentorship programmes for women, among others.

The engagement concluded with remarks from WISCAR's founder Mrs. Oyagbola, "by being here today; you have demonstrated your commitment to serve for the betterment of others. We look forward to furthering productive discussions, towards the realization of our collective goal as espoused by UN Women Nigeria to build an inclusive and prosperous economy that works for all".



(R) Elizabeth at her shop.  
Photo: UN Women/ Faith Bwibo

## ‘Through The Cash Transfer, I Can Now Buy Grain In Cash Up Front’

Elizabeth Ezekiel wears many hats. She is a mother, farmer, and small-scale entrepreneur. She is also a beneficiary, among the 10,000 reached through the Risk Communications and Community Engagement Project.

Her daily routine involves cooking, doing house chores, then heading to the market where she has a small stall. Prior to becoming a beneficiary of the RCCE project, Elizabeth was hawking farm produce on credit. Through the project, she received the cash transfer disbursed funds as to start up a small-scale business.

“Before the project, I used to buy farm produce from wholesalers on credit and sell at the roadside (retail) and then pay back the money once I make some small profit. I now have a shop and don’t need to collect grain on credit, the cash transfer has enabled me to buy it in cash up front, and I am grateful for that”, she said.

The 55-year-old mother of five

mentioned that sometimes there’s low customer patronage, but despite the challenges, she can make income to support her family.

Elizabeth currently has opened a bank account which enables her transact business, receive money from her children and save for her future. She hopes that her farm yields more and business grows in order to scale up and sell more farm produce. In her words, “I am grateful for the project but would love to have additional support as the cost of grain is skyrocketing by the day. If I can get more money, I can invest more back into my business.”

UN Women is working in collaboration with government institutions at both Federal and State levels (Federal and State Ministries of women Affairs) National Social Safety Nets Coordinating Unit (NASSCO) and three women led CSOs including the Women’s Wing of Christian Associations in Nigeria (WOWICAN), the Federation of Muslim Women’s Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), the

Nigeria Girl Guides Association and the United Bank of Africa (UBA).

The partners have joined forces to implement the Risk Communications and Community Engagement Project in 10 States namely Lagos, Akwa Ibom, Borno, Bauchi, Ebonyi, Edo, Delta, Sokoto, Gombe, and FCT. Through the project, 10,000 vulnerable women and girls identified as the worst-hit by the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic are provided with unconditional cash support in the form of palliative. A key element of the intervention is facilitating the leadership role of women and girls in the response and community cohesion as well as ensuring their continuing access to essential services.

The project also aims at financial inclusion for grassroot women who previously had no access to financial services including banking. This intervention is being funded from the UN Basket funds.



# EU-funded Livelihood Restoration Project Benefits 140,000 Conflict-affected Households

One of the beneficiaries of the project.  
Photo: UN Women Nigeria/ Marian Roberts

**A**fter three years implementation of the European Union-funded 'Restoring and Promoting Sustainable Agriculture-Based Livelihoods for Food Security, Employment and Nutrition Improvement in Borno State' project, over 140,000 conflict-affected smallholder farmers' households including 53,398 female-headed households have benefitted from agriculture, livestock, aquaculture, and agribusiness interventions.

Implementing partners Food and Agriculture Organization, UN Women, World Food Pro-

gramme in collaboration with the Borno State on September 21, 2021, organized a closing event to celebrate project results and reflect on the lessons learnt towards a sustainable impact.

The project achieved several impacts including enhancing skills and knowledge of smallholder farmers on good agricultural, nutrition and gender practices, providing smallholder farmers with inputs to diversify their sources of food and income, creating opportunities for markets and business development as well as cooperative

governance and business training skills.

Speaking at the event, Prof. Babagana Umari Zulum, Borno State Executive Governor represented by Alhaji Umar Kadafur, Deputy Governor of Borno State, lauded the EU and UN agencies for collaborating with the state to provide sustainable livelihood for conflict-affected households. "As the project is coming to an end, let me call upon other partners to come forward and join hands with us

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*The project achieved several impacts including enhancing skills and knowledge of smallholder farmers on good agricultural, nutrition and gender practices, providing smallholder farmers with inputs to diversify their sources of food and income, creating opportunities for markets and business development as well as cooperative governance and business training skills.*

in order to sustain the achievements and take them even further” he said.

In her remarks, Ms. Cecile Tassin-Pelzer, Head of Corporation of the Delegation of the European Union in Nigeria and to ECOWAS appreciated the recorded achievements of the project owing it to the effective involvement and coordination of all stakeholders. She said, “We are indeed very pleased with the fact that involvement and coordination at different levels has facilitated the project implementation and the sustainability prospects. We encourage this collaboration going forward. From the EU perspective we will continue to learn and improve ways of designing projects and interventions that facilitate smoother transition from humanitarian assistance to recovery, peace, security, and development.”.

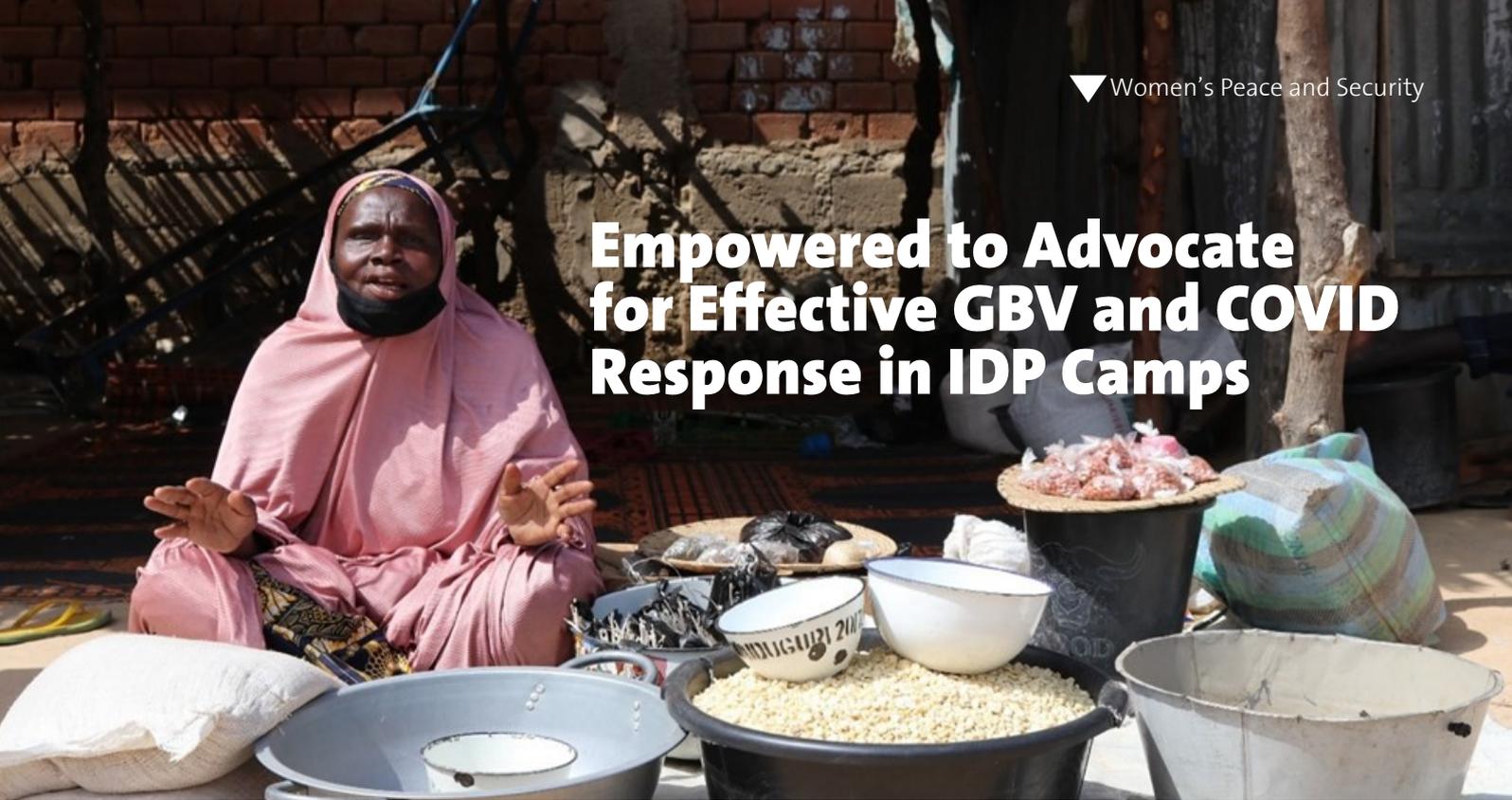
Also, Mr. Fred Kafeero, FAO Representative in Nigeria and to ECOWAS emphasized the need to support households to smoothly settle down in their homelands by ensuring sustainable incomes, food security and nutrition as Borno State is carried on with the resettlement programme. “Despite these major milestones recorded, the number of needy people in

Borno state still remains high. We therefore assure the state our continued collaboration in pursuit of a new Borno state”, he noted.

Adding, Ms. Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS called on the Borno State Government to put in place mechanisms that will ensure sustainability of the projects’ successes. She said, “UN Women stands ready to engage and continue to work with relevant partners to support Government efforts to provide humanitarian and recovery assistance to affected population.”

Mr. Bernard Owadi, Head of WFP Northeast Area Office recalled that, “WFP provided cash transfers to supported households to safeguard investments in agriculture to ensure that households were able to continue and sustain their food consumption levels when going through the transition” .

# Empowered to Advocate for Effective GBV and COVID Response in IDP Camps



Lariba Sule selling her food items at Teachers Village IDP camp in Maiduguri, Borno state. Photo: UN Women/Marian Roberts

Lariba, a mother of four, lives in Teacher Village camp in Maiduguri within the northeast of Nigeria. Her husband was killed by the armed insurgents Boko Haram seven years ago, leaving her and her children on the streets resorting to alms.

She could barely feed herself and her children until she encountered the “Building Leadership Capacity of IDP Women for Effective COVID-19 and GBV Response in IDP Camps in Borno State, Nigeria” project, funded by the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) COVID-19 Emergency Response Window, implemented with the technical support of UN Women.

The project supported her with food items and a start-up grant for business enabling her to buy and sell corn, beans, groundnut, millet, rice, cowpeas and locally made pasta to take care of her family’s needs. She further received training on leadership skills, GBV, human rights and conflict resolution. She recalls prior to the project, women in the camp could not exercise their rights and faced several domestic abuses, rape, and other

gender-based violence leaving perpetrators unpunished. Due to this, women and girls mainly the victims, lived in silence and fear with no access to any livelihood support.

After receiving capacity and being empowered to identify, report and handle GBV cases, Lariba now embarks on a campaign against GBV in the camp. She educates other women and girls on the effects of GBVs especially rape. “I constantly engage women living in the camp to immediately take rape victims to the clinic before reporting to the police because the consequence lead victims with sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, vaginal fistula, trauma and even death. Because offenders of rape are now reported and punished, it has reduced the cases in the camps”, she said.

Known for her zeal to bring about change in her community, Lariba also contributes her time to sensitizing women and children on COVID-19. “I lead other women to embark on household visit to educate families on the importance of wearing nose mask, making use of hand wash-

*She could barely feed herself and her children until she encountered the “Building Leadership Capacity of IDP Women for Effective COVID-19 and GBV Response in IDP Camps in Borno State, Nigeria”*

ing stations in the camp and avoid attending unnecessary ceremonies. I explain to them that because we live in an IDP camp, if we get infected, it will be uncontrollable and dangerous for us” she stated.

The “Building Leadership Capacity of IDP Women for Effective COVID 19 and GBV Response in IDP Camps in Borno State, Nigeria” project is funded by WPHF under the Women Peace and Security program of UN Women and seeks to contribute to lasting peace by ending sexual and gender-based violence, protect women’s rights, advance gender equality, and respond to COVID-19 in settings of conflict and crises.

# Affected by Conflict, yet not broken



*Amina Bukar feeding her ram at Bakassi IDP camp in Maiduguri. Photo: UN Women/Marian Roberts*

**A**mina lived peacefully in Gwoza with her husband and children in the northeast of Nigeria until armed insurgencies raided her home in 2014. Her husband was killed by the insurgents forcing her to run away with her children to Mubi in Adamawa state for safety, where they lived in an IDP camp for four months. In Mubi, her daughter often became sick due to the unfavorable living conditions and lack of livelihood to seek health care. In 2015, Amina together with her children and several others affected by conflict were relocated to the Bakassi camp in Maiduguri, by the governor of Borno state.

With 10 children under her care, Amina lived in Bakassi camp for five years depending on state support and benevolence of others until she was identified for capacity building through the gender mainstreaming in agriculture development intervention under the Women's Economic Empowerment programme of UN Women with funding from the European Union including partnership from Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP). Amina together with other women received capacity training on backyard gardening and cooperative skills to enable them to

generate a source of income. She received some cash from FAO, chicks, and poultry feed from WFP as a start-up for agribusiness. She said, "I received 12 chicks with feeds including N27,000 (US\$50) and successfully fattened them. With coaching and guidance from UN Women, I was able to sell the chicken, and together with sales of proceeds from my garden, bought two sheep and ram lamb to fatten them for sale during festive seasons, and then I buy new ones to fatten them up again".

Through the cooperative skills she received, Amina has also been able to diversify into learning the making of liquid soap for sale. In addition, she buys honey wholesale and retails it as a lucrative venture in her community.

Amina started with two sheep and a ram lamb two years ago and has been able to sell 17 rams with a ram selling for N60,000 (\$US110). Currently, she invests her income in her children's education, health, business and aims to acquire lands for each child. "I do not want my children to become beggars and a burden on others but further their education to tertiary level. I want to see all my children in school so that they can have a fulfilling life. The only thing I can leave my

children in my absence is good education to enable them become independent and not victims of early marriage", she said.

The Gender Mainstreaming in Agriculture Development under the Women's Economic Empowerment programme by UN Women is being funded by the European Union in partnership with FAO and WFP. The project seeks to promote enhanced material that would lead to increased income security and economic independence for women and girls in the northeast region.

*With 10 children under her care, Amina lived in Bakassi camp for five years depending on state support and benevolence of others until she was identified for capacity building through the gender mainstreaming in agriculture development intervention under the Women's Economic Empowerment programme of UN Women.*

## Collaboration among Arms of Government to End Violence Against Women

*Governor Godwin Obaseki giving his opening remarks at the GBV Sensitization workshop for high court judges and judicial officers in Edo State. Photo: UN Women/ Faremi Olanrewaju*



**D**iscussion around ending violent against women and girls was central to the deliberations among High court judges and judicial officers as Governor Godwin Obaseki declared open UN Women’s Sensitization and Capacity Building Workshop on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Edo State.

Under the UN Women and Italian Government Programme on Preventing Forced Migration and Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria, a Sensitization and Capacity Building Workshop was carried out with High Court Judges and Judicial Officers of Edo State to deepen their knowledge on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence issues in Edo State and to also ensure their actions are in line with International Best Practices.

UN Women Country Representative, Ms Comfort Lamptey, in her opening remarks, welcomed the Governor and dignitaries present, stating, “following two high-level trainings for the members

of the State level GBV Committee to support the implementation of the Amended VAPP Act which held in August and September, UN Women deemed the importance of a capacity building workshop for members of the Judicial system in Edo State, which is why we are here today”.

“The Judicial branch is crucial to support the implementation of the VAPP Act and the sustainability of all efforts made by key stakeholders to ensure a victim-centred approach during trials. We expect to provide a solid basis for the responsiveness from all the arms of the Government to facilitate prevention, protection, prosecution and partnerships concerning GBV and trafficking issues in Nigeria”.

The Deputy Representative of the Italian Embassy, Mr Tarek Chazli appreciated the hospitality received from the Government of Edo State and commended Gov. Obaseki for signing the Amended VAPP Act into

Law. He also stated that Italy appreciates the successful five years of partnership with the Edo State government in implementing several programmes and envisaged future collaborations due to the impact of this project in the state.

The importance of the workshop was at the pinnacle of messages from dignitaries present; the Governor declared the seminar open, reiterating his commitment to protect the rights of GBV victims. Governor Obaseki said,

“In Edo State, we have tried to seek justice for survivors by strengthening the law and other related agencies, establishing approaches to grant justice to girls, women and vulnerable persons. I hope that efforts derived from this partnership will contribute to Edo State Government generating substantial results in eradicating GBV in the State”.



Group Photo of participants at the WIFTI training. Photo: UN Women/ Faremi Olanrewaju

## UN Trains Women in Film and TV On Advocacy to End GBV and Passage of GEOB

**U**N Women, under the EU-UN joint Spotlight initiative, conducted a 2-day training for Women in Film and Television International, Nigerian Chapter. The training with women professionals from the Film/ TV Industry provided them with important methods of advocating for the elimination of Violence against Women and Girls and the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill.

Hon. Senator Biodun Olujimi commended UN Women for this initiative.

“It is imperative that we constantly engage with the industry because it possesses a grand outlet with all the tools to roll out timely, relevant and accurate products relating to our message in the Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill. Equally important is the fact that we still also need to collectively, in collaboration with Nollywood, advocate for an end to Gender-based Violence in our communities”, she said.

Senator Olujimi added that “As a creative industry, there is limitless space to design and release products embedded with information and visuals about violence against girls and women

and to also create products that propagate will gender equality in Nigeria”.

UN Women Country Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ms Comfort Lamptey in her keynote address said, “Women will be collaborating with senior leaders of WIFTI, Nigeria Chapter, to leverage on the momentum towards the second reading of the GEOB, as well as the 16 days of Activism to launch this network.

She added that the collaboration will position the network to advocate for an increase in women’s political representation and address violence against women and girls as women in film and television and the wider society, adding that the collaboration will also seek to leverage on WIFTI’s convening power to support the film and TV industry to structure products to champion gender equality in Nigeria.

“The workshop will serve as a platform to increase awareness of the Bill and garner support toward its successful passage. In the same vein, the workshop will focus on advocacy around ending gender-based violence and violence against women and girls, looking at concepts of gender in Nigeria as well as effectively integrating key advocacy

messages, transformative storylines and powerful portrayal of women and girls in TV, film, and media”, she said.

The Chair, WIFTI Nigeria Chapter, Ms Ajoke Silva said WIFTI is convening a workshop alongside UN Women through the Spotlight Initiative to let people within the entertainment industry and women understand the gender issues and all that is behind the Gender and Equal opportunity Bill.

The Veteran filmmaker said the reason for the workshop is to educate other filmmakers on the issues of gender and the equal opportunity bill which can be injected into their works and messages.

“Most of the people in the room are writers, directors and producers. Most of them work behind the scenes but they are the people who put together the project, the performance they present to the public. The performers are the faces of the project that these people put together. So, the strategy is to let the people who actually craft the messaging understand the issues behind the message.” she said.



A scene from the short film on women trafficking. Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu

## Gripping Public Service Announcement Tackles Trafficking of Women and Girls

**S**o you wan travel abroad?" the worried character, played by the renowned Nollywood actress, Stephanie Okereke Linus, asks the young woman who has been told she will be taken abroad by a flamboyant woman. The woman is probably an aunt, a family friend, or an old acquaintance of her mother.

Just like many young women who have returned from Europe to tell grim, heart-wrenching stories of unimaginable ordeals and others whose graves will never be found, the story of the young woman in the short film does not end well.

Through this thought-provoking short film, Stephanie Okereke Linus, with support from UN Women and the Government of Italy, makes a public service announcement against trafficking women and girls. The initiative is under the auspices of the Preventing Forced Migration and Trafficking in Women and Girls in Nigeria project, funded by the Government of Italy.

The trafficking of people for sex and labour is a global issue fuelled by poverty, desperation,

conflict, inequality, and greed. According to the United Nations, 50 per cent of detected victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation, while 38 per cent were trafficked for forced labour. Female victims continue to be the primary targets: a 2019 report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime shows that women and girls together account for 72 per cent of all human trafficking victims detected globally, with girls representing more than three out of every four child trafficking victims.

National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons reports show that 60–80 per cent of the victims of the sex trade in Europe are Nigerians. The agency further contends that 75 per cent of those who are trafficked within Nigeria are trafficked across states, while 23 per cent are trafficked within states.

Reinforced border security and international cooperation has not been able to eliminate this global crime, as the decision of the victim to travel with the traffickers is one of the factors responsible for the proliferation of trafficking in persons. If young people are informed enough to

resist the enticement of travelling abroad, cases of human trafficking would reduce.

Film has proven to be an effective tool for education and sensitization on human trafficking and related issues. It has been used by development partners and activists to address global and local issues, with the aim of stimulating social change. Principally, this is also the aim of this public service announcement. Using a unique theatrical style, the human rights advocate and actress walks through different scenes in the short film in which actors are portraying the steps taken to lure victims and the eventual consequences.

In this short film, Stephanie is the voice of reason, urging the actors and the viewers to make better choices for themselves and avoid the deceit of human traffickers. The film is a powerful tool that can be used by government, educationists, development partners, and civil society organizations in the fight against the trafficking of women and girls.

# Empowering Women living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria

In the past, my rights were violated, I was stigmatized, I was violated physically and emotionally, and I didn't know where to channel it", said Stella Obianuju, a woman living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria, who participated in one of the trainings for leaders of the Association of Women Living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (ASWHAN) towards the reduction of gender-based violence and stigmatization.

The Association of Women Living with HIV and AIDS in Nigeria (ASWHAN) is an umbrella body of support groups of Women Living with HIV and AIDS in Nigeria with over 850 support groups registered under it across the country. It advocates for the recognition of positive women's right in Nigeria and seek to put in place comprehensive HIV and AIDS prevention, care, and support services.

In Nigeria, gender inequalities and low socio-economic status of women and girls continues to fuel women's susceptibility to HIV infection, gender-based violence, stigma and discrimination and other forms of abuse. Women living with HIV/AIDS face multiple forms of discrimination, stigma, and discrimination because of their HIV/AIDS status.

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Stella Obianuju, at a UN Women supported Workshop for Women Living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria, in Abuja.  
Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu

In recognition of these differential needs, National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) with support from partners have taken critical steps in mainstreaming gender in the HIV/AIDS responses. Despite the efforts, the leadership of the Association of Women Living with HIV&AIDS in Nigeria (ASWHAN) faces challenges in achieving their goals.

It is in this context, UN Women through the Enhancing Institutional and Technical Capacity of Women and Girls Living with HIV for more inclusive and Sustainable HIV Response in Nigeria Project (EITC) and in collaboration with UNAIDS, NACA, UNESCO and other partners undertook targeted interventions. These interventions include conducting a gender assessment to generate relevant gender data to support the national HIV/AIDS response. Secondly, supporting ASWHAN to produce a strategic framework and funding plans to strengthen its operational base and capacity to undertake interventions to eliminate gender-based violence, stigma, and discrimination. Thirdly, conducting capacity building and advocacy workshops on Gender Based Violence, Stigma, and discrimination for selected ASWHAN national executives and state coordinators.

A major component of the intervention is the organizing of capacity building and advocacy workshops on gender-based violence, stigma and discrimination for the national and state executives/coordinators of ASWHAN, with selected representatives from the federal and state ministries of women affairs; NACA, SACAs, NEP-WHAN; and other networks and stakeholders.

Objectives of the training was to deepen the knowledge and understanding of Women Living with HIV on sexual and gender-based violence prevention and HIV stigma reduction; strengthen the advocacy and leadership skills of the organisation's executives; inaugurate SGBV focal persons among the trained participants for follow-up and coordination of GBV response

in the network; develop actionable work-plan for ASWHAN's GBV interventions across Nigeria.

The 3-day workshop was held consecutively in Abuja and Lagos. The workshop took into consideration the specific goal of ensuring that participants understood the root causes and drivers of GBV, stigma and concrete prevention and mitigation strategies. The training was participatory and hands-on, with intensive plenary sessions, brainstorming activities, role plays, and experience sharing.

Some of the challenges identified at the workshops and consultations include:

- Congestion at health facilities hinder services to women living with HIV/AIDS
- Vulnerability of women makes them easy victims of GBV
- Issues of confidentiality hinders willingness to access services in public health facilities
- Issues of transactional sex among sex workers
- Issues of inadequate counseling, psychotherapy, psychological support
- Issues of support group sideline's ability to adapt and adjust
- Lack of collaboration and partnerships in engaging the youth and younger generation
- Challenges arising from Covid-19 lockdown and subsequent restrictions

Also emerging from the workshop sessions were critical suggestions to effectively address GBV among women living with HIV/AIDS and they include:

- HIV positive persons should be attended to by Health workers who are living with HIV
- There should be exclusive HIV/AIDS facilities, which will enhance access to medical services for persons living with HIV/AIDS
- More sensitization and education should be conducted to reduce exploitation of

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*Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, speaking at the Closing of the Workshop in Abuja.  
Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu*



*Dr Gambo Gumel Aliyu, Director General of National Agency for the Control of AIDS, during the Launch of the Toolkits in Abuja.  
Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu*



*Mrs. Funke Oladipo, Ag. Director, Women Development Department, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, speaking at the Launch of the Toolkits.  
Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu*

To restructure and reposition ASWHAN, the following are some of the significant recommendations adopted by participants at the workshops:

- Replace Board of Trustees members of ASWHAN, as their tenures have expired.
- Re-establish ASWHAN as a stand-alone organization, independent of NEPWHAN and APYIN.
- Review ASWHAN constitution to capture contemporary issues
- Put in place transparency and accountability mechanisms
- Establish a sustainable fund-raising system
- Establish ASWHAN owned facilities and offices
- Prioritise activities related to ASWHAN’s mission and vision
- Prioritise activities based on issues peculiar to zones
- Develop a more effective monitoring and evaluation system

In the course of the workshop, a toolkit developed by UN Women to support the response to HIV in Nigeria was officially launched at the closing ceremony well attended by MDAs, development partners, INGOs, local CSOs and the media. Specifically, Director General of National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA), the Executive Secretary of NHRC, the Coun-

try Director of ActionAid Nigeria and the Managing Director of Society for Family Health (SHI) were in attendance; the Honourable Minister of Women Affairs was well represented by the director of Women Development Department.

Also present were some heads of UN agencies in Nigeria including the Country Representatives of UN Women and UNAIDS.

Various commitments were made by relevant stakeholders; including promises to protect the rights of women and girls living with HIV, intensify efforts to address stigmatization against women and girls living with HIV/AIDS, continuous training and capacity building and other institutional supports.

One of the sustainability strategies for the capacity development intervention is the step-down of the knowledge and skill acquired to women living with HIV/AIDS across Nigeria, with the aim of empowering women and reducing cases of GBV, stigmatisation and discrimination in Nigeria. Some of these step-down trainings have already been conducted in some states and several more scheduled. “With this training, I am well informed and empowered. Hence, whosoever violates my rights,

whether husband, public, community, whether in the workplace, I now know how to channel it and get justice. I will be taking this knowledge that I have acquired to members of my support group, the grass root communities, and the community where I work”, said Stella.

Enhancing Institutional and Technical Capacity of Women and Girls Living with HIV for more inclusive and Sustainable HIV Response in Nigeria Project is funded through the United Nations AIDS (UNAIDS) Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF). The United Nations instrument to maximize the coherence, coordination and impact of the UN’s response to AIDS by combining the efforts of the UN’ Co-Sponsors and partners towards the achievement of its Zero New HIV Infection and Zero Discrimination toward ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Participants pose for a group photo at one of the workshops in Abuja. Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu





▼ Generation Equality

## I Am Generation Equality: Asmau Aliyu, Nigerian Girl Guides Association

Since her early primary school days, Asmau was a brilliant girl performing well both in her academics and social life. She had a strong passion for community work which led her to joining the Girl Guides Association of Nigeria - a platform that would enable her to give back to both her school and community.

She joined the club in primary school, with a hope to not only give back to her school through various activities, but to also mentor other younger upcoming guides: brownies (age 5-10), guides (age 11-14), rangers (age 15-18) and young leaders (18+). Now, a graduate of Computer Science, Asmau, in her words "Our mission as an Association is to ensure that girls and young girls and women achieve their full potential as responsible citizens of their communities, country and world at large. In the recent years, we have seen the impact of guiding move from the school into the community".

As the largest voluntary association of young women in the world, the Girl Guides Association aims to reach out to every

girl and has membership across tribe, religion, class and race with members in over 150 countries.

Being in a leadership position in the Nigerian Chapter has enabled Asmau and her peers provide non-formal education activities including workshops, camps, leadership trainings and door to door sensitizations.

According to Asmau, when COVID-19 pandemic hit, and the cases of gender-based violence soared, the guides knew that this was their chance to step up for their community. Hence the association was able to carry out community sensitizations on Covid 19 protocols including proper hand washing, social distancing as well as distribution of relief items including sanitary materials for the girls and young women. the Nigerian Girl Guides Association played a crucial role in reaching communities through various advocacy campaigns and messaging.

"We are now working on issues related to girls empowerment and are the channel through which solutions reach girls and

*She had a strong passion for community work which led her to joining the Girl Guides Association of Nigeria - a platform that would enable her to give back to both her school and community.*

women at the grassroots level. I look forward to a future where various stakeholders come together and enhance efforts towards addressing and preventing issues of gender-based violence against women and girls' she concludes.

Asmau Aliyu is currently the National Youth Commissioner of the Nigeria Girl Guides Association. She works closely with the UN Women RCCE project for COVID 19 response. Through her role in the organization, she works to ensure that the voices of young people are included in decision making within the association and communities.

# “I Want to Build a World where All People with Disabilities and I Are Treated as Equal Humans”

## — Uzoamaka Asiegbu

Programme and Inclusion Analyst, UN Women Nigeria

**O**n 3 December every year, the world commemorates International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This year, we spoke with Uzoamaka Anita Asiegbu, Programme and Inclusion Analyst for UN Women, to better understand her role in the Nigeria Country Office.

Disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal or environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. When persons who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments interact with these barriers, the barriers put them in the category of persons with disabilities.

**How would you describe your typical work week?**

I don't think there is a typical work week, but most times, my week includes a daily review of



Photo: UN Women Nigeria

programme colleagues' work to ensure that they are inclusive and supporting them to mainstream disability and other vulnerable areas into their programme implementation. I also provide technical inputs to strengthen both new and old project documents and concept notes to help mainstream inclusion into programmes and projects. I identify opportunities for strategic advocacy by UN Women to expand the awareness of different stakeholders and development partners on the priorities of women and girls facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Additionally, I advise and represent the UN Women Nigeria Country Office at weekly events and activities around disability inclusion at the UN, at the local and national level, and even at the global level.

**What is the situation of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, including that of women and girls with disabilities?**

There are an estimated 30 million persons with disabilities in Nigeria. In 2019, on 23 January, Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari signed into law the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018. The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and imposes sanctions on those who violate it.

Implementation has been sluggish – attitudinal barriers such as social stigma and environmental barriers such as inaccessible structures still exist for persons with disabilities. There are also several institutional barriers, such as discriminatory policies and legal frameworks that hinder persons with disabilities from effectively participating in activities equally with others.

For women and girls with disabilities in Nigeria, these barriers are amplified. They experience discrimination based on multiple aspects of their identities, their gender, their disabilities, etc. These exclusions and discriminatory practices, and the lack of adequate gender-disaggregated data on persons with disabilities, in turn contribute to poverty and prevent them from participating in public

discourse, political representation, and/or development decision making.

**You've been working with UN Women as the Programme and Inclusion Analyst. What is the most urgent thing that needs to be done (for more inclusion), in your opinion?**

Through sensitizations and capacity building, people will understand clearly that persons with disabilities are equal members of society and deserve equal opportunities like people without disabilities. Discrimination against disabilities will reduce, and people will be willing to remove barriers that hinder persons with disabilities from participating in various aspects of society.

**What are UN Women and other agencies doing to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities, especially women and girls, are included in various aspects of society?**

Already there is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, an international human rights treaty of the United Nations intended to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Also, there is the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, which provides the foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of the work of the United Nations.

The UN Country Team in Nigeria has a Disability Inclusion Inter-Agency Coordination Mechanism whose goal is to provide policy advice to the UN Country Team in implementing the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, maintaining the prominence of disability inclusion in both programmatic and operational areas.

Specifically, UN Women has made an extra effort to ensure the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities through the design of UN Women's policy strategy entitled The Empowerment of Women and Girls with Disabilities – Towards Full and Effective Participation and Gender Equality.

**What are some of the most memorable moments in your line of work?**

My best memories are from the capacity-building sessions. The disability inclusion brown bag session for UN Women staff, the inclusion session for UN Women Spotlight Initiative implementing partners, the inclusion session for youth groups advocating for the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, the inclusion session for UN Volunteers, and a good number of others. These sessions have taught me that people are keen to include people from vulnerable areas, but most don't know how to. Building accessible structures, designing accessible projects, and other reasonable accommodations will be resolved when society understands how to do them.

6. Who are some of the people that inspire you and the work that you do?

I, Uzoamaka Anita Asiegbu! My advocacy for disability inclusion and mainstreaming is inspired by my personal experiences as a person with a disability. I want to build a world where all people with disabilities and I are treated as equal humans. Where barriers no longer exist and we can access education, work, etc. without discrimination.

As someone passionate about gender equality and disability inclusion, I get to do both in my career, which is exciting for me.

Fifteen per cent of the world's population have at least one disability. Women and girls constitute half of the 15 per cent. Mainstreaming disability-related issues and providing reasonable accommodations ensure that all women and girls, including those with disabilities, have a seat at the discussion table in all sectors throughout society.

# 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM: ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



Participants at one of the events for the 16 Days of Activism in Nigeria. Photo: UN Women Nigeria

The 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence is celebrated globally to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls. The campaign runs from November 25 to December 10 of every year. It is used as a strategy by individuals and organizations around the world in organizing programmes, initiatives and advocacy efforts that call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

UN Women Nigeria country office joined the global campaign to address the state of gender-based violence in Nigeria. Through strategic programmes organised in partnership with the government of Nigeria and other stakeholders, we created public awareness on issues of violence against women and girls, advocated implementation of legal instruments and stricter punitive measures for perpetrators.

Highlights of our campaign include the lighting of the UN

House and other government buildings in orange, engagement with the media, stakeholder conversation on the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act; the 2nd Annual Forum of the Women, Peace and Security Sector; Launch of Nigeria's chapter of the Women in Film and Television, and a film screening at the Brazilian Embassy.

*Turn over for events*

## UN House and Other Government Buildings Aglow in Orange



Photo: UN Women Nigeria

In commemoration of #16Days of Activism, the UN System in Nigeria and the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs held an Orange Lighting Ceremony on November 26, 2021. Government officials, including the Honourable Minister of Women and Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen, and representatives of the UN, including UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Edward Kallon and UN Women Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ms. Comfort Lamptey, gathered at the foyer of

UN House in Abuja to shine the spotlight on gender-based violence and ask the government of Nigeria and stakeholders to join the world to “Orange the World: End Violence Against Women and Girls Now!”.

Civil society organisations and the media were present to witness the illumination of the UN House, executed perfectly by the UN Resident Coordinator, Edward Kallon and the Honourable Minister of Women

Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen. On turning on the switch, the UN House radiated a glow of orange, a symbol of hope and assurance that one day all forms of gender-based violence will be eliminated.

Other government buildings were also lit in orange – the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs complex and the National Defence Headquarters. This is a demonstration of Nigeria’s commitment to ending violence against women and girls.

## Media Briefing on the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence



Photo: UN Women/Faremi Olanrewaju

On 22nd November 2021, UN Women Nigeria held a briefing with media partners to discuss the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence.

UN Women Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Comfort Lamptey, represented by the Deputy Country Representative, Lansana Wonneh stated that the purpose of the meeting was to strengthen cooperation with media practitioners during the period of the 16 Days of Activism and update them of UN Women Nigeria planned activities.

Lansana informed participants that one in three women across the world will experience violence in

their lifetime. This means more than 1 billion women and girls face physical or sexual abuse, hence the need to increase awareness about gender-based violence. He reiterated that media reportage on gender-based violence can improve awareness, change negative perceptions, and reduce GBV stigma.

The Coordinator of the Joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, Tosin Akibu, in her presentation examined the Significance of the 16 Days of Activism. She announced that In Nigeria 11,200 rape cases were reported in 2020 alone, including children raped to death, blaming the increasing rate of gender-based violence to poor access to justice for survivor, stigma,

victim blaming, and slow progress from domestication of laws to implementation.

Tosin participants that the effort of Spotlight and partners is yielding results as GBV reporting has improved in recent times. One-stop Centers have also been established in some states to provide support for GBV survivors, including the Nana Khadija Center, where out of 463 of over 500 persons who have accessed this center are women. A data collection center, headquartered at the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, has also been established.

Some of the concerns registered by participants include under-reporting of cases due to distrust for media, inadequate GBV education in the suburbs and schools, settlement of cases outside court, and the need for more GBV training for security agencies and the media, to improve their response to GBV.



Samuela Isopi, EU Head of delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Representative to Nigeria and the ECOWAS, Edward Kallon, UN Resident Coordinator, Dr. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, HE Dame Pauline Tallen, Honourable Minister of Women Affairs. Photo: UN Women/Faith Bwibo

## Press Conference in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs

On the 25th of November 2021, a Press Conference was held by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development with support from UN Women Nigeria and other agencies to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence.

The press conference was attended by media personalities and reporters from various news agencies – electronic media, print and social media. Speakers at the conference include the Minister of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen; UN Resident Coordinator, Edward Kallon; UN Women Representative to Nigeria and the ECOWAS, Comfort Lamptey; Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, Dr. Natalia Kanem; EU Head of delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Samuela Isopi, and other heads of agencies.

According to Minister Pauline, 972 gender base violence cases were being prosecuted by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in various courts. She mentioned that reports from six states of the federation showed that out of 5,204 gender-based violence cases reported, 3,125 women survivors were demanding for Justice; of

these, only 33 perpetrators have so far been convicted, representing 0.51 percent, reiterating that Justice delayed is justice denied.

“The fatal cases are 160, closed cases 231, while open cases (cases pending in court) are 972. This trend is unacceptable. And we will all intensify efforts with the federal minister of justice to ensure justice for victims and survivors”, she said.

The minister mentioned that Nigeria has 31 Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC) that provide free medical assistance, forensic medical examination counseling and justice support services to survivors of sexual violence across 17 states. Though, inadequate funding has hindered its optimal functionality.

UN Women Country Representative, Ms. Comfort Lamptey, on her part, commended the government of Nigeria for its effort in domesticating the Violence Against Persons Proposition Law and the Nigeria Governors Forum for declaring a state of emergency on gender-based violence in 2020. She mentioned that 30 out of 36 states had now passed the law and called attention to the importance of a multi sectoral and partnership approach to addressing this menace.

“First, let’s put women at the center of the responses, including the policy situation solutions. Second, let’s allocate resources and include evidence-based measures to address violence against women and girls. Thirdly, let’s strengthen services including access to justice for women who experienced violence. And fourthly, let’s invest in prevention efforts to end violence against women and girls”, she said.

The UN-Resident Coordinator in Nigeria, Edward Kallon, also lauded the government of Nigeria for its effort to domesticate the VAPP Act and the Child Rights Act



(Front) Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Representative to Nigeria and the ECOWAS, and HE Dame Pauline Tallen, Honourable Minister of Women Affairs, at the opening ceremony. Photo: UN Women Nigeria

## Second Annual Forum of Women in the Security Sector

The Second Annual Forum of the Women in the Security Sector held at the National Defence College, Abuja, on the 2nd and 3rd of December 2021. It was organised by UN Women in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, the Nigeria Defence Headquarters, and British Military Advisory Training Team, in commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence.

The theme of the event was 'Mainstreaming Gender in National Early Warning Systems and Responses to Security Challenges'. The objective was to address operationalization of existing gender policies across security institutions, sharing lessons and good practices, provide action-able short and medium-term recommendations necessary to achieve gender balance and deliver effective and quality gender responsive systems, operations and programming at all levels.

The forum was timely because while progress has been made in the recognition of the need to promote gender-responsive security sector reforms, including the passing of gender policies by the Armed Forces of Nigeria, Nigeria Police, the Nigeria Security and the Civil Defence Corps, and the demonstrated commitment to its gender responsive operations, a full-scale implementation of these policies is still a challenge. Recent reports show that women account for about 10% of military personnel,

with similar data for the Police and other institutions; only a few security agencies have larger percentage of women in their personnel.

The opening ceremony was attended by the wife of the First Lady of Nigeria, Dr Aisha Buhari; the Honourable Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline K. Tallen; the UN Women Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, UNFP Country Representative, The Chair, Senate Committee on Women, representatives of Service Chiefs and the AIG of Police. Over 300 people most of whom were female security sector personnel from the Military, Police and other paramilitary agencies.

"While we look forward to the realization of the objectives of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, we must strengthen women's voices and participation. We must remember to involve women more in mediation and resolution of conflicts", said Aisha Buhari.

UN Women has in its programming undertaken baseline studies that indicate that more needs to be done to address issues of women's representation across security services, through non-discriminatory recruitment policies, enhancement of conditions of service, opportunities for growth and leadership for women, through revised retention and promotion policies; strengthening knowledge and capacity for gender responsive security; and the development of mechanisms and

guidelines to support internal and external security operations.

To enhance these efforts, the UN Women Nigeria in partnership with the German Government launched a project aimed at enhancing gender sensitive security sector operations and fostering community dialogue between women affected by conflict and security sector actors in the efforts to mainstream gender equity in Nigeria's security sector.

In outlining efforts of UN Women women's peace and security, Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Representative to Nigeria and the ECOWAS stated that, "UN Women facilitated and supported the institutional strengthening of security agencies in Nigeria, particularly the Armed Forces of Nigeria, Nigeria Police Force and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, by deepening the knowledge of officers on Gender Mainstreaming and the Women, Peace and Security frameworks".

With improved gender mainstreaming in the security sector, more women will have equal access to opportunities. Most importantly, according to UN Women, 'Women's participation in mediation is essential for achieving lasting, positive peace, which goes well beyond just the silencing of guns'

# A Call to Accelerate Implementation of Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law



Dr Zainab Shinkafi-Bagudu, the First Lady of Kebbi State, presenting her speech.  
Photo: UN Women Nigeria



Mr. Edward Kallon, Humanitarian Coordinator of the UN system in Nigeria.  
Photo: UN Women Nigeria



A panel discussion during the conversation on the VAPP Law. Photo: UN Women Nigeria



Traditional leaders at the conversation on implementation of the VAPP Law.  
Photo: UN Women Nigeria

On 25th November 2021, the Joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative organised a Stakeholder Conversation on the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law as part of activities commemorating the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. Stakeholders from key sectors participated in the event.

In his speech, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the UN system in Nigeria, Mr. Edward Kallon, urged stakeholders to stand up to ensure dignity and justice for the most marginalised, especially women and girls.

“Now more than ever we must ensure to always say no to violence against women and girls. Let’s stand together to ensure dignity and justice for women.” Mr. Kallon said, and further called for synergy on the implementation of the VAPP Act.

He explained that women and girls continue to be exposed to various forms of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and barriers in access to justice, and there was need to review the status of the implementation of the VAPP through strategic partnership, sensitization, and promotion of women leadership in decision making. He charged all stakeholders to continue to build on the foundation of the transformation and realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria and the 2030 target.

The First Lady of Kebbi State, Dr Zainab Shinkafi-Bagudu

expressed her delight that finally the VAPP bill has been passed into law in Kebbi. She disclosed that there were many challenging moments for the Governor, herself, and the leadership of the State House of Assembly, but at the end the bill was passed into law.

“In terms of awareness, in terms of creating more facilities, in terms of capacity building, passing the appropriate laws, we have seen an unprecedented increase in the activities that will help reduce the scourge of sexual and gender base violence”, said Dr. Zainab.

UN Women Country Representative to Nigeria and ECO-WA, Ms. Comfort Lamptey, explained that there was need for more concerted efforts to address gender related violence especially in North-East Nigeria and other parts of the country facing challenges of insecurity.

She explained that “UN Women supported efforts to respond to the humanitarian crisis in the North-East through targeted programming around livelihood support and early recovery for women and girls; a broader transition from humanitarian relief to longer-term recovery and development; GBV prevention and protection for conflict-affected women and girls; and the improvement of conflict-affected women’s access to justice.”



Group photo of dignitaries and members of Nigerian Chapter of Women in Television and Film International pose. Photo: UN Women Nigeria

## Launch of the Nigerian Chapter of the Forum for Women in Film and Television International

On 26th November 2021, UN Women through the Joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in collaboration with leading women from the creative arts industry launched the Nigerian Chapter of the Forum for Women in Film and Television International (WIFTI).

WIFTI is a global network dedicated to advancing professional development and achievement for women working in all areas of film, video, and other screen-based media. In recognition of the important role that the media and entertainment industry play in shaping attitudes, norms and culture within society, the launch of the WIFTI Network Nigeria Chapter will provide an important organising platform for women in film and television to respond to gender-related priorities within their industry, whilst also facilitating their efforts to champion gender equality and women's empowerment more broadly in Nigeria.

In her remark, UN Women Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ms. Comfort Lamptey stated that "As much as we work to support the government to translate international commit-

ment on women's rights into practice, and into laws and policies on the ground, we are also very much an organization rooted in women's movement in civil society, because we believe when women come together as a collective, they are a powerful force for change".

Ms. Lamptey further stated that, "Our mandate of really supporting in this case, women in the creative arts industry to come together to help advance women's rights is the key factor here. It's important for women's rights in Nigeria and it is important for us to ensure all hands are on deck to support the work on gender".

Convener of WIFTI Nigeria, Ms. Ajoke Silva commended UN Women for its support and the push to establish the Nigerian chapter of this network.

"We have all been working individually on advocating for women rights in the film industry, working with UN Women brought us together to work as a collective and to work in collaboration on issues that we believe affect women and girls, we know the power that we carry in this influential sector, we know we

have the power to shape minds. Now we are going to learn together and work together for the good of woman kind, for the good of humankind and for the good of Nigeria". Dame Tallen expressed her gratitude to UN Women and Ms. Joke Silva for putting together the Launch of the Forum for Women in Film and Television, Nigeria.

"This forum clearly shows that there is hope for Nigerian Women. This has set the tone for other women organizations to also follow. We can never address pertinent issues without having women in the room, through this network; I believe a lot can be done", she said.

Also In attendance was Australian High Commissioner to Nigeria, HE John Donnelly; United States Ambassador to Nigeria, HE Mary Beth Leonard; First Lady of Kebbi State, Dr. Zainab Shinkafi Bagudu; renowned Nigerian actor, Rita Dominic; amongst other stakeholders.

# Spotlighting the Achievements of Outstanding Polish and Nigerian Women

## Moments from the Meeting



All photos: UN Women/Faremi Olanrewaju

As part of the activities to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Nigeria and UN Women through the Joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative held a workshop on Spotlighting the Achievements of Outstanding Polish and Nigerian Women.

This joint initiative created a platform for sharing of rich histories, experience and knowledge between Polish women and young Nigerian women leaders with the aim to inspire and motivate Nigerian and Polish women to champion themselves, their rights, career, and future.

The session featured high level participation from the diplomatic community and civil society organizations including the Honourable Minister for Women Affairs, HE Dame Pauline K. Tallen, OFR, KSJ, UN Women Country Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ms. Comfort Lamptey, the host, H.E. Joanna Tarnawska, Ambassador of Poland to Nigeria, and ambassadors of Finland, Germany, Ireland, Malaysia, Benin, European Union, Hon. Aishatu Dukku, Chairman, Committee on Electoral Matters, House of Representatives and a cross section of Civil Society leaders.

Nigerian women celebrated at the meeting include Wendy Okolo, aerospace research engineer at NASA; Latifat Tijjani, who won gold in the women's – 45kg event at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic

Games and 2015 African Games in Brazzaville; Ladi Kwali, who received international awards for her achievement in pottery; Sade Adu, the first Nigerian (African) to win the Grammy Award in 1985; Ransome Kuti, women's rights activist and founder of the Nigerian Women's Union; Kudirat Abiola, one of the leaders of pro-democracy movement during the military regime of 1993-1998; Chimamanda Adichie, whose published works have garnered internal acclaim, and Dr. Ola Brown, medical doctor, entrepreneur, trainee helicopter pilot, author, and founder of West Africa's first indigenous Air Ambulance Service.

The Ambassadors took turns to share their leadership experiences and advocacy journeys, with emphasis on the important role intergenerational mentorship plays in mainstreaming women's leadership and the need to create sustainable pipelines of engagement for young people's participation.

The presentation on 'Resilience Building and Promoting Good Mental Health' by Dr. Fatima Akilu elicited robust questions and interaction from participants including survivor stories. The need to coalesce around identified Champions was also identified as critical to deepening and amplifying advocacy around ending violence against women and girls.



Ricardo Guerra de Araujo, Brazilian Ambassador to Nigeria, and Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Country Representative pose for a photo with stakeholders during the film festival and exhibition. Photo: UN Women Nigeria

## Film for Social Change: Orange the World Film Screening



Participants watching one of the movies screened during the film festival. Photo: UN Women Nigeria



At the exhibition, a participant views the photo of a dress belonging to a little girl raped by a 30-year-old neighbour. Photo: UN Women Nigeria



Ricardo Guerra de Araujo, Brazilian Ambassador to Nigeria presents his remarks at the opening of the film screening. Photo: UN Women Nigeria

Film and the entertainment industry have the power to foster discussions and points of action in addressing gender-based violence. Film has a particularly transformative potential as it promotes a level of in-depth understanding and engagement with issues not facilitated by other mediums.

As part of activities for the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence, the Embassy of Brazil and UN Women Nigeria jointly hosted a film screening and exhibition on the 2nd and 3rd of December 2021. The evening screening and exhibition at the Embassy of Brazil sought to spotlight violence against women and girls as a major hindrance to achieving gender equality, highlight gender-based violence as a global phenomenon, raise awareness of the different forms, and inspire participants to take bold actions towards ending violence against women and girls.

The Screening featured about 10 feature films, short films, and documentaries. The films presented stories of women from different parts of the world and touched on themes including but not lim-

ited to rape, harmful traditional practices, intimate partner violence, harmful widowhood practice, female genital mutilation, child marriage, domestic violence, consent, GBV inflicted to men and boys, sex work, access to justice, violence against women living with disabilities, violence against women living in rural areas, among other topics.

Critical discussions ensued at the end of each session, examining issues presented in the films, challenges faced by women and girls today, possible actions and solutions and how film and entertainment can better amplify the voices of survivors and activists. Speakers from different sectors shared their perspectives, personal stories and lessons learned in their effort to end violence against women and girls.

The two days event ended with remarks from H.E Bisi Fayemi, First Lady of Ekiti, Hon. Min. of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen, Dr. Saudatu Mahdi of Women's Rights Advancement & Protection Alternative, and Ms. Comfort Lamptey UN Women Country Rep, who called for action from all stakeholders, including those in the room.



Some registered members of the Yobe State chapter Women-led CSOs with partners in a group photo displaying 16 days of activism messaging during the launch in Damaturu. Photo: UN Women/Marian Roberts

## Network of Women-Led CSOs Launched in Yobe State

As part of 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence, the Network of Women-Led Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Yobe State chapter was on December 2, 2021, launched in Damaturu.

The launch which brought together executives of women-led organizations and stakeholders including representatives from the ministry of women affairs, UN agencies, among others aimed to strengthen and amplify the voice of women affected by the northeast insurgency in order to accelerate women and girl's participation in humanitarian response and recovery plan, leadership skills, and decision processes across Yobe State.

Hajiya Husna Ibrahim, Chairperson of the network Women-Led Network of CSOs, indicated the network was an inclusive platform established to welcome all interested women-led organizations implementing humanitarian and development programs in Yobe State.

"There is no limit to the number of membership enrolment. We are open to all well-meaning women-led organizations willing to join us in the fight to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls", she said.

Mrs. Lilian Unaegbu, UN Women's Programme Coordinator for Gender & Humanitarian commended the network for collectively championing the empowerment of women and girls. She further called on all to intensify advocacy efforts to facilitate signing of the violence against persons prohibition (VAPP) law in Yobe State.

The launch was climaxed with a visit to the state's specialist hospital where cash and food items were donated to patients.

The network of women-led organizations in Yobe State was established in 2019 with technical support from UN Women to empower women advocate for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, increase women's par-

ticipation in decision-making structures at all levels as partners and beneficiaries of development, provide humanitarian and recovery assistance to populace affected by insurgency.

Currently, the network has 30 registered women-led organization working across the 17 local government areas (LGAs) in Yobe State.



Photo: CLEEN Foundation

## CLEEN Foundation with support from UN Women Escalates Campaign Against Gender-Based Violence

To mark the annual global campaign against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), CLEEN

Foundation with support from UN Women, implemented series of activities in focal states. This includes social media campaigns, in-school student-centered advocacy visits to secondary schools, a documentary screening in Edo State, and a community awareness town hall meeting in Anagada, Gwagwalada, Abuja.

The objective of the campaigns was to provide a medium for adult and young Nigerians to report and escalate issues related to human trafficking through increased awareness activities. Specifically, this meant enhancing awareness creation in SGBV-prone communities and empowering in-school students with the information and resources to engage as community champions against human trafficking in their schools, families, and communities.

Highlights of activities include Social Media Campaign on the global theme for the year using hashtag #IAmOrangeTheWorld; Documentary Screening on Forced Migration and Human Trafficking today 25th

November 2021 in Edo State; In-School Documentary Show at Pace Setters College, Wuye, Abuja; In-School Documentary at Show-Baptist High School, Kubwa, Abuja; In-School Documentary Show at Government Secondary School Wuse, Abuja; In-School Documentary Show in 1 primary school and 2 secondary schools in Imo State; Street Campaign in Wuse Zone 3, Abuja; Webinar - Orange the World: Improving security for Women and Girls through state-led responses; Community Outreach at Tunga-Maji, Gwagwalada Area Council FCT scheduled for Wednesday, 8th December 2021; Documentary Screening on Forced Migration and Human Trafficking in Lagos State;

A total of 300 hundred students were reached in the three schools visited in the Federal Capital Territory (Baptist High School, Pace Setters Academy, and Tudun Wada Zone 4), and 230

teenagers were reached through the Edo State documentary screening. Meanwhile, a total of 170 community members were reached during the town hall meeting in Anagada in Gwagwalada Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory.

Participants demonstrated a working understanding of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, the dangers of human trafficking, and the push and pull factors that drive human trafficking and sex slavery. They also expressed their commitment to intensify the fight against human trafficking and willingness to explore available whistleblowing and reporting mechanisms put in place by the government.



Members of NAWLO displaying placards during the 16 Days of Activism sensitization walk in Yola. Photo UN Women/Marian Roberts

## Adamawa State Women-led Organisation Walks Against Gender-Based Violence

The Network of Adamawa Women-led Organization (NAWLO) on December 6, 2021, embarked on a sensitization walk to mark 16 days of Activism against gender-based violence in Yola.

The walk which started from the Mubi Roundabout to Target Junction in Yola, Adamawa state had representation from government institutions, donor agencies and the general public aimed at getting the attention of relevant stakeholders to address issues of violence against women and girls.

Walking through the streets of Yola, participants held placards with messages such as 'End Violence against Women and Girls', 'No means No', 'End Human Trafficking', 'Respect Women' among others, encouraging victims to speak up in order to get support and justice.

Participants converged at the Women Development Center after the walk to officially launch NAWLO as an umbrella body of women-led

organization and introduced its executive members.

Speaking at the launch, Mrs. Galaxy Thami, chairperson of NAWLO explained that the network is committed to advocating for an end to violence against women and girls. "The level of gender-based violence remains unchanged despite our tireless effort to eliminate it. This should not make us relent but rather amplify our voices until we achieve zero violence as a network", she emphasized.

Representing UN Women, Ms. Hyele Mshelia, Women Peace and Security Program Analyst reiterated UN Women's continuous support to NAWLO with funding from the government of Japan to ensure all major stakeholders played their role towards the prevention of violence and harmful practices against women and girls. "Women and girls are the most vulnerable especially during armed conflicts. As we commemorate 16 days of Activism with the launch of NAWLO, let us be

earnest for 365 days of action to ending violence against women and girls", she said.

The Network of Adamawa Women Led Organisation (NAWLO) the umbrella body of women founded non-governmental organisation that working in collaboration with government, international humanitarian community, donors, and other civil society groups. The network seeks to advance gender empowerment, women and girls' participation in leadership, eliminate gender-based violence among others, to enable self-reliance, recovery, and resilience of the most vulnerable in conflict affected areas.



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