



Photo: UN Women/Oluoma Ali

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# TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>Editorial.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Coordination and Partnership.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Celebrating Gender Champions: IWD 2023 Award Gala.....	5
A Strategic Framework to Enhance the Efforts of Development Partners Group on Gender.....	6
UN Women showcases youth tech and innovation for gender equality and women’s Empowerment.....	7
UNWOMEN, UNAIDS, and Partners Trains Women Living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria...8	
<b>Gender and Participation in Public Life.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Assessing violence against women in the 2023 general elections.....	11
Women Representation in Elected Assemblies Nigeria 2023.....	13
<b>Women’s Economic Empowerment.....</b>	<b>14</b>
Empowering Women Entrepreneurs through Enhanced Public Procurement Knowledge.....	16
Towards a gender-responsive regional development planning.....	17
<b>Women’s Peace and Security.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Strengthening Peace and Security Networks in Jos.....	20
Riyom, Where Women Are Advancing Women’s Inclusion in Peacebuilding and Decision -making.....	21
Women in Crises-affected Northeast Turning Skills to Entrepreneurship.....	23
<b>Eradication of Violence Against Women and Girls</b>	
Traditional Leaders and Clergies Renew Commitment to Curb Violence against Women and Girls in Nigeria.....	26
<b>Video Impact Stories.....</b>	<b>27</b>



*Beatrice Eyong*

UN Women Country Representative  
to Nigeria and ECOWAS

## Sustaining Efforts to Make Life Better for Women and Girls

At the beginning of this year, there was so much attention on Nigeria's 2023 General Elections, as we – in collaboration with civil society organisations and women groups – escalated our efforts in the advocacy for inclusion, gender, and equal opportunity in the political and election processes. We held meetings with the media to advocate increased reporting of women's candidates' election campaign activities. We were looking out for women's participation as candidates, voters, or officials.

However, we did not take our eyes off other areas where women and girls need sustained support to live a better life. This biannual newsletter captures some of our efforts to sustain gender-responsive initiatives.

One of these efforts is the convening of the High-level Donor Feedback Forum to assess UN Women's Strategic Note for Nigeria (SN 2023 – 2027). The SN aims to respond to Nigeria's development priorities in relation to GEWE. It is fully aligned with the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Nigeria (UNSDCF 2023-2027) and the country's National Development Plan (2021-2025).

It is important to mention the launch of the Development Partners Group on Gender (DPGG)'s strategic framework for the years 2023-2028. The strategic framework is a roadmap for development partners to complement national gender initiatives and streamline efforts, with a focus on evidence-based research, support for legal and policy frameworks, technical

expertise, financing for gender equality, and accountability mechanisms.

As part of activities to commemorate International Women's Month, in March 2023, the UN Women Nigeria Country Office showcased the initiatives of young women and men in Nigeria who are using technology and digital innovation to advance gender equality, women's empowerment, and inclusion, which was in line with the International Women's Day theme for 2023 "DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality." The showcase event featured 22 young women and men (70% women and 30% men) aged 18–35 using technological innovations and tools to promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and inclusion.

This issue also captures UN Women's economic empowerment initiative, particularly, around affirmative procurement. With the affirmative procurement initiative, we are asking for equal opportunity and fair participation of women in contract bidding processes in public and private sector organisations. We are excited that many businesses are receiving procurement capacity-building skills and heads of government are affirming support for this initiative.

In this edition, we also share a few human-interest stories. We thank all our partners for the collaboration and sustained efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Nigeria.



UN WOMEN

# COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP

Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu

# DONORS RE-AFFIRM THEIR SUPPORT FOR UN WOMEN NIGERIA

On the 19th of January, 2023 UN Women Nigeria, held a high-level feedback meeting with donors and international partners to discuss a new Strategic Note for Nigeria (SN 2023 – 2027). The meeting served as a platform to provide feedback on the draft Strategic Note and gather valuable insights and recommendations from the donors and international partners.

During the meeting, UN Women Nigeria highlighted the achievements and impact of the previous Strategic Note (SN 2018-2022) in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the country. Significant progress has been made in areas such as economic empowerment, political participation, ending violence against women, and ensuring access to basic services for women and girls.

The new Strategic Note (SN 2023-2027) builds on these achievements and aims to further strengthen the efforts and partnerships to accelerate progress towards gender equality in Nigeria. It is designed to align with Nigeria's National Development Plan (2021-2025) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2023-2027). By doing so, it ensures a coordinated and coherent approach towards achieving gender equality as a key element of Nigeria's broader development agenda.

Over the next five years, UN Women, together with its donors and development partners, will focus on leveraging its triple mandate to drive action and achieve tangible results in gender equality and women's empowerment. The normative support provided by UN Women will involve working with the government and civil society to strengthen policy frameworks, legal frameworks, and institutional mechanisms that promote gender equality.

The feedback meeting with donors and international partners served as an important opportunity to gather valuable input and perspectives, ensuring that the Strategic Note is comprehensive, relevant, and impactful. UN Women expresses its gratitude for the support and collaboration of its partners and reiterates its commitment to working together towards a Nigeria where gender equality is a reality for all.

*Photos from the High-level Donor RoundTable Meeting.  
Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu*





**From left:** Ms. Beatrice Eyong, UN Women Representative to Nigeria & ECOWAS, Mr. Ari Aisen, IMF Resident Representative for Nigeria, H.E. Amb. Samuela Isopi, EU Ambassador to Nigeria & ECOWAS, H.E. Amb. Mary Beth Leonard, US Ambassador to Nigeria, Hon. Prince Clem Agba, Minister of State for Budget & National Planning, Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, President of Human Capital Africa & Senior Economic Adviser at Africa Economic Development Policy Initiative (AEDPI), H.E. Dame Pauline Tallen, Minister of Women Affairs, Mr. Mohammed Yahya, UNDP Resident Representative to Nigeria, H.E. Ihab Awad, Egypt Ambassador to Nigeria.  
**Photo:** UNDP/UN Women Nigeria

## CELEBRATING GENDER CHAMPIONS: IWD 2023 AWARDS GALA

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) commemorated 2nd edition of the International Women’s Day Awards Gala in Lagos. The event was convened by UN Women and UNDP in Nigeria in partnership with the Diplomatic Missions and Delegations of Australia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the European Union, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

The 2023 Awards Gala leveraged on the influence of female ambassadors and heads of missions to Nigeria to advocate for increased women’s participation in decision-making across all sectors. The event also provided a platform to highlight the invaluable contributions of Nigerian women and raised awareness about the major challenges they continue to face.

This year’s theme: DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality celebrates the women and girls who are championing the advancement of transformative technology and digital education brought together high-level champions, thought leaders and partners work-

ing tirelessly to accelerate gender equality in Nigeria and globally. Amongst the distinguished guest in attendance was Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, President of Human Capital Africa & Senior Economic Adviser at Africa Economic Development Policy Initiative, who gave the keynote address on Women’s Representation in Leadership and Gender Equality in Nigeria.

The Awards Gala set out to highlight groundbreaking achievements for women’s leadership and social inclusion; to incentivise leaders to take further actions toward gender equality; and to advocate for women’s increased representation in governance.

Awards were presented to recipients across the categories of: Political Leadership and Governance, Private Sector, HeForShe Champion, Media and Culture, Grassroots & Civil Society, Feature Award – DigitALL, Outstanding Leader, Lifetime Achievement Award.



Developmental partners at the official launch of the DPGG Strategic Framework 2023-2028 Photo/UN Women Nigeria

## A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE THE EFFORTS OF DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS GROUP ON GENDER

The Development Partners Group on Gender (DPGG) recently launched its strategic framework for the years 2023-2028. This eagerly anticipated event brought together representatives from various government agencies, United Nations bodies, international non-governmental organizations, and women's groups and foundations.

Ms. Beatrice Eyong, Country Representative to UN Women Nigeria and ECOWAS, welcomed participants and emphasized the importance of coordination and coherence to achieve the shared goals of empowering women and girls. She described the strategic framework as a roadmap for development partners to complement national gender initiatives and streamline efforts, thereby avoiding duplication. Aligned with the revised gender policy of 2022, the framework focuses on evidence-based research, support for legal and policy frameworks, technical expertise, financing for gender equality, and accountability mechanisms.

The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Matthias Schmale, commended the collaborative efforts of the DPGG members in pursuing GEWE in Nigeria. He highlighted the importance of cohesion and collaboration in implementing the framework effectively.

Mr. Schmale also praised the leadership of the Honorable Minister of Women Affairs and her team for their commitment to this cause.

Honorable Minister for Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen, expressed her appreciation for the collective efforts of development partners in promoting GEWE in Nigeria. She stressed the need for accountability and coordination among members to avoid duplication of efforts. The Minister urged heads of agencies and organizations to invest in implementing the framework, providing human resources with decision-making powers to the DPGG.

In the presence of dignitaries from various government agencies, diplomatic missions, and the private sector, the Honorable Minister herself launched the strategic framework for the years 2023-2028.

With the launching of the DPGG's strategic framework, Nigeria takes a significant step towards achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. Through collaboration and coordination among stakeholders, the framework sets the stage for impactful actions and initiatives that will bring about positive change.

# UN WOMEN SHOWCASES YOUTH TECH AND INNOVATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT



Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu

**A**s part of activities to commemorate International Women's Month, in March 2023, the UN Women Nigeria Country Office showcased the initiatives of young women and men in Nigeria who are using technology and digital innovation to advance gender equality, women's empowerment, and inclusion, which was in line with the International Women's Day theme for 2023 "DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality."

Nigeria's youth population is growing exponentially, with more than 50% of her over 200 million population being classified as youths with an estimated median age of 18. Likewise, Nigeria's technology, information, and communications sector is becoming one of the country's fastest-growing industries.

In her opening remarks, the United Nations Women's Country Representative, Ms Beatrice Eyong, stated that the theme is a reminder of technology and innovation's role in empowering women and girls and achieving gender equality. She pointed out that the event also demonstrated how digital innovations by young men and women in Nigeria could solve a variety of issues across sectors of society – health, social, financial, and medical, access to markets and environmentally conscious products and energy solutions; and how these technologies could be used to benefit women and enhance gender equality. She, however, decried the continued gap regarding representation in employment and education in the technological sector in Nigeria.

The showcase event featured 22 young women and men (70% women and 30% men) aged 18–35 using technological innovations and tools to promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and inclusion. These initiatives ranged from mobile applications that provide support resources to training female programmers and developers, reporting sexual and gender-based violence, to providing

educational and personal development resources. There were also innovations for breast cancer detection, smart crop spraying, digital learning, audio translators, payment simplifiers, medical guidance, menstrual products, energy conservation, employment, e-commerce, agricultural solutions, sexual health education, talent nurturing and one which promotes a safer taxi experience for women and girls.

The event also featured special remarks by the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Matthias Schmale called for action in digital literacy among women and girls, promotion of women's leadership in science and tech, and an end to the pervasive issue of violence against women and girls in the digital space. Furthermore, he urged the Nigerian government to do more by increasing investment in science and technology.

Dignitaries and key partners, including the ambassadors of Japan, Norway, France, Finland, and Mexico, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Science & Technology, National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, etc., commended UN Women for the initiative in putting the showcase together and emphasized that the Nigerian government should prioritize gender equality in the tech space. They pledged their continued support to UN Women in its work to secure a more inclusive tech space for women and girls while encouraging young entrepreneurs to believe in themselves, collaborate, think creatively, and never accept failure but keep pushing to make an impact.





Photo: UN Women Nigeria

# UN WOMEN, UNAIDS, AND PARTNERS TRAINS WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV AND AIDS IN NIGERIA

**U**N Women and UNAIDS in collaboration with its partners on June 8, 2023, trained members of the Association of Women Living with HIV and AIDS in Nigeria (ASHWAN) on leadership skills in Abuja and supported the association to transition their leadership after 12 years.

The one-day training aimed to build the leadership and governance skills of newly elected executives of ASWHAN to enhance effective performance in steering the affairs of the association. The training was facilitated by UN Women, UNAIDS, the Federal Ministry of Health, the National Agency for the Control of AIDS, and the Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria under the project ‘Enhancing the Institutional and Technical Capacity of Women and Girls Living in Nigeria Towards More Inclusive and Sustainable HIV Response in Nigeria (EITC)’.

Through the EITC project, training on Gender-Based Violence and Stigma Reduction, Mental Health, Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights, have been conducted for ASWHAN members across the 36 states and the FCT with positive outcomes.

In her welcome remarks, Madam Assumpta, National Coordinator of ASWHAN, commended partners for the technical and financial support towards bridging all the institutional gaps the association faced. She further urged all to relentlessly stand at the forefront of campaigns on global issues affecting women living with HIV and AIDS.

UN Women’s National Programme Officer, Patience Ekeoba, in a keynote address, applauded the outgoing

executives for efficiently steering the affairs of the association through the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. She entreated participants to take the opportunity of the training for their self-development, improved social interactions, and the management of individual family affairs. “The quality of leadership people get reflects how worthy followers benefit”, she said.

Participants were taken through topics including; Program Coordination, Building synergy and fostering a collaborative environment, Championing advocacy campaigns and responding to the needs of ASWHAN, and Compliance with legal frameworks and constitutional provisions.

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. The association was established in 2004 when women living with HIV and AIDS protested for price reductions or free Anti-Retroviral Therapy for children living with HIV and AIDS during the National HIV and AIDS summit in Nigeria. ASWHAN advocates for women’s rights in Nigeria and seeks to put in place comprehensive HIV and AIDS prevention, care, and support services.

“

The support from UN Women, UNAIDS and other partners, has strengthened the capacity and structure of ASWHAN. We are in a good stead to advance the HIV response in Nigeria especially in relation to PMTCT, VAWG, Stigma reduction and ending inequality.



Photo: UN Women/Oluoma Ali

## Esther Hindi

National Coordinator of the Association of Women Living with HIV in Nigeria (ASWHAN)



# GENDER AND PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE



Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu

## MITIGATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ELECTIONS THROUGH GENDER-RESPONSIVE SECURITY OPERATIONS

In a bid to ensure fair and inclusive elections, UN Women Nigeria, in partnership with the Independent National Election Commission (INEC), organized a two-day training workshop on January 16th -17th, 2023, for participants from security agencies. The goal of the training was to equip security agents with the necessary skills and knowledge to mitigate violence against women during elections, ensuring women can actively participate in the upcoming elections without intimidation or deterrence caused by politically motivated violence.

Electoral periods are often characterized by uncertainty and tension, which can fuel anger and violence. Unfortunately, violence has been used as a tactic to manipulate election outcomes, particularly targeting women in politics. Across the world, including Nigeria, there has been an alarming increase in violence against women in politics (VAWP). This violence takes various forms such as harassment, aggression in the media, physical and sexual vio-

lence, and even assassination. VAWP not only infringes upon women's political rights but also poses a significant hurdle to achieving gender equality and democracy.

Nigeria, like many other countries, has witnessed violence during electoral processes, with women being particularly vulnerable. A report by the Women Situation Room during the 2015 general elections highlighted 4,973 incidents capable of causing a breach of peace within nine days. Unfortunately, many instances of violence against women in elections go unreported, perpetuating a troubling issue with far-reaching implications for democracy, human rights, and security.

By organizing this training seminar, UN Women and INEC aimed to empower security agents and other relevant groups involved in election security with the necessary tools and strategies to prevent violence against women in elections.

The objectives of the training seminar included providing participants with a general understanding of the electoral process, electoral-related offences, and violence against women in elections. Additionally, strategies for enhancing effective and non-violent electoral participation were developed and awareness on the issue was raised.

Violence against women during elections remains a pressing issue that must be addressed to ensure a fair and inclusive democratic process. Therefore, it is important for all stakeholders to continue working together to eradicate violence against women in politics and uphold the principles of democracy, human rights, and gender equality.



Lansanah Woneh, UN Women Nigeria, Deputy Country Rep, speaking at the workshop. Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu



Pauline Tallen, Minister of Ministry of Women Affairs declaring the workshop open. Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu



Cross section of participants. Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu



## TOWARDS WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS

In the months leading to the 2023 General Elections, UN Women, with the support of Canada, spearheaded initiatives aimed at fostering women's political participation towards increasing women's representation in governance.

Recognizing the influential role of media in shaping public opinion, UN Women actively engaged with media outlets in Nigeria to promote women's political participation.

We organized workshops and training sessions to sensitize journalists on the importance of gender-sensitive reporting and unbiased coverage of women candidates and issues. Journalists were provided with guidelines to report on electoral matters in a manner that reflects the diverse voices and experiences of women.

As a result of these interventions, there was an increase in the reportage of women in the news, which created awareness and encouraged

women to engage actively in the political process. Media coverage showcased women candidates, their accomplishments, and their policy agendas, thus dispelling stereotypes and biases against women in politics.

This initiative saw the collaboration between UN Women, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) to set up women's election situation rooms to monitor women's participation in the 2023 general elections.

These situation rooms acted as pivotal platforms for women to monitor, document, and report violations against women's political rights throughout the electoral process. Equipped with sophisticated technology, personnel, and resources, these rooms provided real-time analysis and facilitated responsive actions to any irregularities and challenges faced by women politicians and voters.

In collaboration with local civil society organizations, the situation rooms built a network of trained volunteers, data analysts, and legal experts who were responsible for compiling accurate reports and disseminating them to relevant stakeholders, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and security agencies.

The establishment of the situation rooms also gave insights to election-related violence and discrimination against women. Prompt reporting of these violations enabled relevant authorities to hold perpetrators accountable, thus creating a safer and more inclusive environment for women to participate in politics.



Jennifer Bina Ifedi, victim and survivor of electoral gender-based violence during the 2023 presidential elections. Photo: UN Women/Aisha Zannah Tubo

Source: HDMI2  
No Signal

## ASSESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS

**U**N Women with support from the Government of Canada and the European Union hosted a post-election conference to assess politically-motivated gender based violence during the 2023 General Elections on Monday, 15 May 2023. The conference brought together agencies and civil society organizations that participated in the observation of the 2023 General Elections. This included WILPF Nigeria, FIDA,

ElectHER, Women in Politics Forum, Zamani Foundation, Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTf), KIMPACT Development Initiative, FOMWAN, National Democratic Institute, the Westminster Foundation, and the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs. Discussions and presentations at the conference aimed at reviewing the challenges in reporting violence against women in elections, the arising factors that will influence data collection, actions to take after violence and intimidation reports, prospective interventions, as well as a joint summary report for advocacy and follow-up, and practical recommendation to make the issue of gender-based violence more visible.

Electoral gender-based violence includes physical, emotional, sexual, and intellectual violence, that impedes the full participation of women in every aspect of elections – as

voters, party members, aspirants, candidates, party officials, electoral officials, security agents, observers, monitors, and as Press. UN Women Country Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Beatrice Eyong, in her remarks, reiterated that in Nigeria and other parts of Africa, women have been killed during elections, as voters and candidates, with some quitting their political aspirations after receiving death threats.

“Women candidates have faced various forms of targeted, gender-based violence and that the lack of data on violence against women in politics, negatively affects evidence-based advocacy for influencing change in laws and policies and for establishing protection systems for women in politics”, said Ms. Beatrice.

Facilitator of the conference, Prof. Joy Ezeilo, Founder of Women Aid Collective (WACOL), highlighted the discrimination, exclusion and dismissal of women’s participation in the 2023 elections despite the high amount of actual representation and participation by women in the 2023 electoral process.

HE. Mrs Samuela Isopi, Head of the European Union delegation to Nigeria and the ECOWAS represented by Esme Stuart, spoke on the marginalisation and underrepresentation of women in Nigeria’s governance sys-

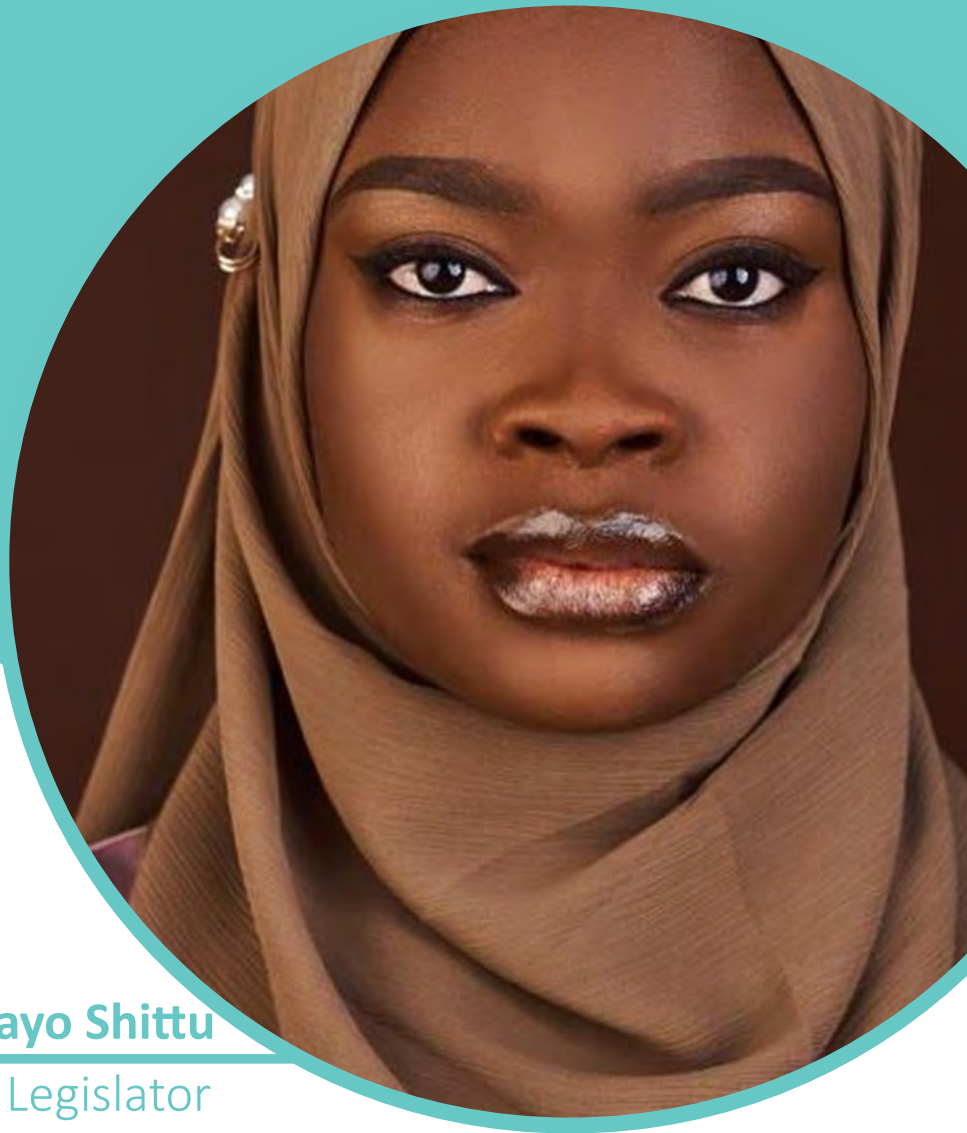
tems, stating that “the full and equitable participation of women in public life is essential to building and sustaining strong, vibrant democracies. There is strong evidence that as more women are elected to office, there is an increase in policymaking that emphasizes quality of life, and reflects the priorities of families, women, and marginalized groups.”

Jennifer Bina Ifedi, victim and survivor of electoral gender-based violence from the 2023 presidential elections, was present at the conference and gave her testimonial of the incident. She highlighted the absence of security agents at the polling unit as a precursor for the assault. Jennifer’s resolve to return to vote after she was attacked and injured has become an inspirational story around Nigeria.

Recommendations from includes the need for gender-responsive security measures to curb violence against women in elections; swift prosecution of perpetrators of violence against women in elections regardless of status; deploying of unified data tool for gender-responsive assessment of elections; advocacy and sensitization to reduce party-influenced electoral violence.

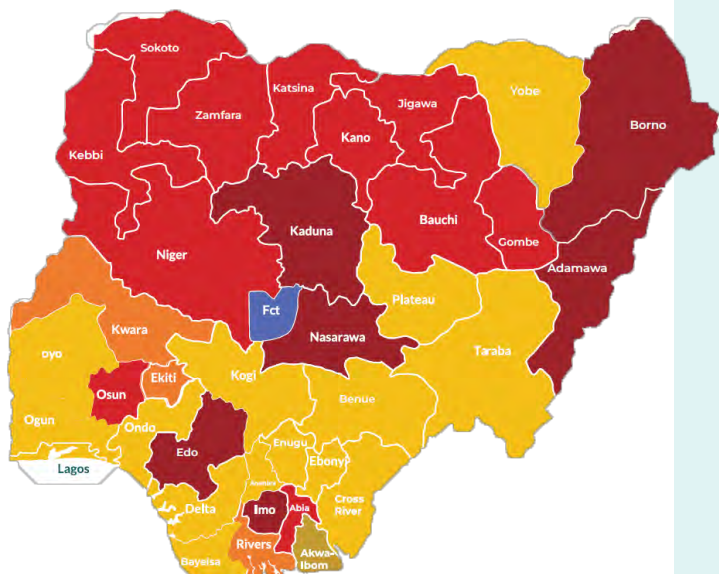


The UN women trainings brought women together across party lines, it made us realize the need to work together. We're requesting continuous support from UN Women so that we continue working together and be more effective in our offices.

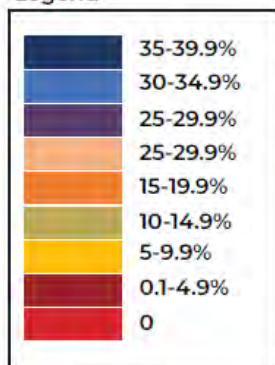


**Hon. Rukayatu Motunrayo Shittu**  
Youngest Elected Legislator

# WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN ELECTED ASSEMBLIES NIGERIA 2023



Legend



In the wake of the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria, concerns have arisen regarding the limited participation of women in the electoral process and the prevalence of violence against women in politics (VAWP). The under-representation of women not only hinders their ability to influence decision-making processes but also hinders progress towards a more inclusive society.

To shed light on this issue, the FIDA Nigeria Situation Room, with the support of UN Women, released a report highlighting the alarming levels of violence against women during the recent elections. This report aimed to raise awareness, report incidents, and recommend solutions to mitigate against VAWP.

Some key findings from the report revealed that a total of **240 incidents** were reported by accredited observers and the general public to the situation room. These included acts of intimidation, harassment, and discrimination that significantly limited women's participation in the electoral process. The report also extensively documented various instances of violence against women, including physical assaults, verbal abuse, threats, and acts of intimidation. Women were targeted simply for exercising their right to vote or for their political beliefs.

To address these issues FIDA Nigeria, through the support of UN Women, worked closely with law enforcement agencies to create a safe and secure environment for women to participate in the elections. Hotlines were established across focal states, allowing the public to report any suspicious acts or instances of violence against women, with the aim of preventing disruptions during the election.

In light of these findings, the importance of strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies to effectively address violence against women during elections has become more apparent. This can be achieved through gender-sensitivity trainings and increased presence at polling stations to deter acts of violence. Furthermore, public awareness and education campaigns are essential to promote gender equality and encourage women's political participation.

By emphasizing the importance of respecting women's rights and the consequences of violence against them during elections, we can begin to foster a safer environment for women. There is also a need to review and amend existing legislation and policies to provide greater protection for women in the electoral process. This includes enacting stricter penalties for those involved in violence against women and developing policies that specifically address the challenges faced by women in political participation.

UN Women continues to support and empower women to participate in politics and exercise their right to vote without fear of violence. Through the WPS program and its initiatives, we are working towards ensuring equal and meaningful political participation for women in Nigeria and creating safe spaces for women to engage in political activities.





# WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu

COOPERATIVE  
EBONYI SOUTH UNITED WOMEN  
#10 A Onueka Rice Mill Club  
Tel: 08123414545  
25KG

EBONYI SOUTH UNITED WOMEN  
#10 A Onueka Rice Mill Club  
Tel: 08123414545  
25KG

EBONYI SOUTH UNITED WOMEN  
#10 A Onueka Rice Mill Club  
Tel: 08123414545  
10KG



We want to have more women who are millionaires and billionaires so this is a very good initiative that the UN Women has introduced in Kaduna State.

Photo: UN Women/Oluoma Ali



**Engr. Sanusi A. Yero**

Director General, Kaduna State Public Procurement Agency



Group Photo of Participants and Facilitators during the Capacity Building Workshop Kaduna. Photo: UN Women/Oluoma Ali

## EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH ENHANCED PUBLIC PROCUREMENT KNOWLEDGE

On the 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> of June 2023, UN women in collaboration with the Kaduna State Public Procurement Authority help a capacity building workshop for women-owned/led businesses in Kaduna State, under the auspices of the Affirmative Procurement Project. The workshop aimed at addressing the structural barriers faced by women in business and to foster a comprehensive and sustained engagement on both the supply and demand side to empower women entrepreneurs in Kaduna State.

The workshop saw an incredible turnout, with fifty-eight enthusiastic participants in attendance. The UN Women Project Manager, Dr. Chukwuemeka Onyimadu, first commended the efforts of the Kaduna State Public Procurement Authority (KADPPA), giving an overview of the workshop's purpose. He also pointed out the importance of affirmative procurement as an entry point to women's economic empowerment, highlighting the low representation of women-owned businesses in public procurement and the potential for empowering women through procurement opportunities.

The KADPPA team provided training on general procurement processes and regulations, giving participants a deeper understanding of the procurement principles, methods and procedures, and the bidding process. A live bid session was also conducted, allowing participants to practice what they had been thought and demystify what can often be a complex and overwhelming process. The workshop also featured practical sessions. Participants worked collaboratively in groups identifying the challenges that limit the full participation of women-owned businesses in public procurement in Kaduna.

The workshop also introduced participants to e-procurement and its impact on procurement processes in Kaduna State. Participants had the opportunity to gain hands-on experience with the e-procurement portal, further enhancing their understanding of the digital procurement landscape. This knowledge will undoubtedly benefit their businesses in the modern marketplace.

One of the highlights of the workshop was the commitment shown by the participants. They left the workshop with renewed determination to apply the knowledge they acquired and to share it with others through step-down training sessions. This commitment ensures that the impact of the workshop will extend beyond its immediate participants, creating a ripple effect throughout the community. By empowering women entrepreneurs with enhanced public procurement knowledge, we are creating a network of empowered individuals who can drive positive change and contribute to economic growth in Kaduna State.

In his closing remark, DG of Kaduna State Public Procurement Authority (KADPPA), Engr. Sanusi A. Yero thanked UN Women for the initiative he also expressed his desire to have more female millionaires and billionaires in Kaduna State stating that for far too long, women have been left behind, unable to fully participate in economic activities due to various barriers and requirements that they often fail to satisfy. 'This workshop is an opportunity to equip them with the tools and knowledge necessary so that they can benefit from the procurement process. By empowering women and increasing their economic capacity, we will not only foster gender equality but also unlock new sources of economic development for Kaduna State.'



UN Women's Country Rep, Beatrice Eyong, facilitating a session during the regional workshop. Photo: UN Women/Oluoma Ali

## TOWARDS A GENDER-RESPONSIVE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

In collaboration with UNDP, UN Women held a regional training workshop on integrating gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction into development planning and budgeting at the central level and in sectors, taking gender into account. The training was part of the Sahel Resilience Project, a Swedish government-funded project which aims to build disaster risk reduction and adaptation capacity for resilience in the Western Sahel and Lake Chad Basin by ensuring that women's civil society organizations, regional institutions, and governmental entities of the Sahel countries have institutionalized and domesticated development planning that considers gender-responsive disaster risk reduction, and risk-informed programming and investing for resilience building.

At the event, UN Women Representative Ms Beatrice Eyong highlighted the importance of the exercise, noting that vulnerable women often bear the brunt of increasing disaster risks. As part of the training exercise, participants from different countries also presented strategic solutions unique to their country's needs. While assessing their presentations, UN Women's country Rep Ms Beatrice Eyong emphasized that to successfully respond to a crisis, think outside the box and recognise the different roles both men and women play. She also stated that political will is necessary for this to happen and must be created where this is not present. She noted that it is beneficial to analyze the situation in each country and find where to anchor financing.

Ms Beatrice also recommended the use of evidence-based advocacy to garner government support. According to her, to build a strong case, stakeholders must be able to demonstrate that such strategies are already in existence through policy documents, national normative framework or ratified documents. The participants praised the initiative, expressing their hope that the collective efforts of governments and individuals will help to reduce the likelihood of disasters in the Sahel region. They shared their thoughts on needing more research and data to inform decision-making and ensure the most effective strategies are in place. They also noted that implementation frameworks must be backed with budgetary allocations and contextualized locally for disaster risk reduction to be effectively mainstreamed.

Participants from Nigeria and other West African countries attended the workshop.



**WOMEN'S  
PEACE AND  
SECURITY**

Photo: Women Mediation Network

“

We used to have rape cases in Riyom but with assistance from the WPS women mediators we have been able to arrest some of the perpetrators and some of them have been charged to court. Since then the issue of rape in Riyom has died down.



Photo: UN Women/Oluoma Ali

### **Da Gyang Ntah Dahoro**

Traditional Ruler Rim, Riyom LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria



Group Photo of Participants and Facilitators during the Capacity Building Workshop. Photo: UN Women/Oluoma Ali

## STRENGTHENING PEACE AND SECURITY NETWORKS IN JOS

UN Women, with support from the Norwegian government through its Women Peace and Security (WPS) program has been actively working across states in Nigeria to promote women's inclusion in peace-building and security processes, highlighting their role as vital agents of change. Recently, a two-day workshop was conducted to strengthen the WPS structure in Jos, Plateau state. The workshop brought together 40 participants from various WPS structures including, Women Peace Mentors, HeForShe Network, WPS Media Network, representatives of the state ministry of women affairs, and UN Women. The primary objective was to review the Strategic Action Plan (SAP), provide technical assistance, and record empowering stories of success. One of the key outcomes of the mission was the development of a robust security architecture and to improve social cohesion programs, mediation and reconciliation meetings, and justice initiatives for conflict victims and synergy between the individual structures.

The first technical session of the workshop facilitated by Mr. Peter Mancha, Programme Specialist UN Women, focused on UN Women's key achievements, challenges, lessons learned and the next steps of the Programme in Plateau State. Progress reports and Updates from the Plateau State Ministry of Women Affairs and other WPS Structures including the Women Peace Mentors, HeForShe Network and WPS Media Network were also shared. The SAP was also reviewed and plans to enhance the implementation and coordination of activities with key stakeholders were determined.

UN Women also documented inspiring stories of success and survival from beneficiaries of the WPS structure. These stories revealed the transformative impact of gender-sensitive interventions. One remarkable story shared was how, in Mangu, one of the women peace mentors was able to mobilize relief materials for displaced persons and provided housing to those in need.

The positive impact of these interventions was also evident in Riyom, where the number of women in the local traditional council increased from three to eight, and many women, including a forty-year-old, enrolled in school. Speaking at the event Da Gyang Ntah Dahoro, Traditional Ruler Rim, Riyom, LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria appreciated the UN Women for the WPS Program particularly the HeForShe initiative and the WPS mediators "We used to have rape cases in Riyom but with assistance from the WPS women mediators we have been able to arrest some of the perpetrators and some of them have been charged to court. Since the issue of rape in Riyom has died down."

The efforts of UN Women's WPS program in Plateau State have been commendable in promoting women's inclusion in peace-building and security processes. While conflicts still persist in the state, the WPS program has provided women in Plateau with a platform to voice their concerns and actively participate in conflict resolution and reconciliation processes. It has instilled hope among the women and communities of Plateau State, reiterating that conflict resolution, reconciliation, and survival are possible. By empowering women and including them in decision-making processes, UN Women has paved the way for a more secure and prosperous future for Plateau State.



Cross section of the women, during an inter-faith meeting in Riyom. Photo: Women Mediation Network

## RIYOM, WHERE WOMEN ARE ADVANCING WOMEN'S INCLUSION IN PEACEBUILDING AND DECISION-MAKING

In the heart of Riyom, a small village in Jos Plateau state, a formidable peacebuilding reform is taking place. Led by a group of determined women, this movement aims to break down age-old traditional barriers to women's participation in leadership, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding efforts. Through training, advocacy, and persistent efforts, these women are steadily claiming their rightful place in local decision-making.

This began with the intervention of the Norwegian Government-supported UN Women's Peace and Security (WPS) project in the Riyom Local Government area. UN Women has been actively working across states in Nigeria to promote women's inclusion in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and security processes.

To advance this objective and enhance sustainability, UN Women, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, established structures and networks that consists of community leaders and

gender champions. This includes the Women Peace Mentors, HeForShe Network, and Women's Peace and Security Media Network in Plateau State and other focal states.

While intermittent pockets of conflicts persist in the state, the WPS program has provided women in Plateau with a platform to voice their concerns and actively participate in conflict resolution and reconciliation processes. By empowering women who are leading advocacy for women's inclusion in decision-making processes, UN Women has paved the way for more sustainable women's participation in decision-making and peacebuilding.



At the forefront of this movement is a remarkable woman, Chong-Lyop Samuel and other women who participated in the capacity-building training workshops and subsequent routine technical programme support by the UN Women, with funding from the Norwegian Government. Several other women in the State have had their capacity strengthened from participation in this training workshops for gender-responsive peacebuilding interventions.

Central to this empowerment journey was the need to sensitize women on their rights and responsibilities. Through workshops and awareness campaigns, these women, who are drawn from different faiths, were educated on gender-based violence (GBV) and the significance of their role in the community, especially in peacebuilding. Previously seen as inferior, the women of Riyom started to realize their true worth and importance. Chong-Lyop and other women, as trained UN women mentors, transferred essential security and peacebuilding skills, knowledge, and confidence to at least 80 women in Riyom. These women are currently working as mentors in their own immediate communities.

In times of crisis, when villages were attacked, and chaos ensued, the unity forged through these initiatives became a lifeline. Coordinated rescue activities and communal support systems sprang into action, ensuring the safety and well-being of all. In the face of overwhelming odds, the once-disparate communities became a united front, showing unwavering strength and resilience.

No longer content with being spectators, the women of Riyom bravely embraced their newfound knowledge and confidence. Previously, women were



Chong-Lyop Samuel  
Photo: UN Women/Oluoma Ali

denied entry to these crucial gatherings, effectively silencing their voices. However, with the training and advocacy efforts, they successfully broke down these barriers. Now, women in Riyom actively participate in youth meetings, security meetings, and even local government-level security discussions. Their efforts paid off as eight villages in Riyom now have women representation in their traditional councils.

The peacebuilding reform of Riyom is a testament to the power of empowerment, advocacy, and perseverance. The journey is far from over, but the women of Riyom have become beacons of hope, inspiring others on the path to gender equality and social change. Their story serves as a reminder that every voice matters and that when women are empowered, whole communities thrive.



Traditional Council of Riyom, including women representatives. Photo: Women Mediation Network



## WOMEN IN CRISES-AFFECTED NORTHEAST TURNING SKILLS TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**D**uring the COVID-19 pandemic, many people faced significant challenges as economies worldwide were impacted by lockdowns and restrictions. Aisha, a young woman living in Gwange community in Yobe State, was among those who experienced financial difficulties due to the pandemic's effects on her family's income.

Living in a household of 15 siblings, her father, and his two wives, it was very difficult for her family to survive. However, through UN Women's Livelihood project funded by the Government of Japan, Aisha's life took a transformative turn, and she discovered her entrepreneurial talent.

Before the pandemic, Aisha's family relied on agriculture for their livelihood, but the movement restrictions brought due to COVID-19 disrupted their ability to access their farm. As a result, her family's income dwindled, and they struggled to make ends meet. Aisha, being a proactive and determined individual, decided to look for alternative ways to support her family.

At that crucial moment, UN Women through her partner CCDRN launched a livelihood support initiative aimed at empowering individuals like Aisha, who were facing financial hardship during the pandemic. The program offered training in various vocational skills to help participants start up small businesses and become self-reliant.

Aisha eagerly enrolled in the program and discovered her passion for bag-making during the vocational training. The training covered various aspects, from design and pattern making to sewing and marketing techniques. Aisha embraced the learning process with enthusiasm, and her dedication soon caught the attention of the trainers and fellow participants.

As Aisha honed her bag-making skills, UN Women also provided her with start-up kits including equipment and materials. With her newfound talent

and resources, Aisha started creating unique and stylish bags that reflected the cultural heritage of her community. She incorporated local fabrics, colors, and traditional designs into her creations, making her bags stand out in the market.

Within a few months, Aisha's bags gained popularity, and she began receiving bulk orders. The success of her business did not only revive her family's financial situation but also inspired other young women in her community to explore their talents and start their own ventures.

Aisha's bag-making enterprise gave her financial stability, increased her confidence and self-esteem. She had discovered her entrepreneurial skill and creative potential, which had previously been untapped. "This has been a life-changing experience for my family. I now have an inflow of a steady income and can invest in my siblings' education and contribute to community development projects" Aisha said.

Aisha's unique bag designs spread by word of mouth catching the attention of regional marketers. The recognition boosted her business further, and she can train other women from her community, creating a small but thriving enterprise that contributes to women's empowerment in her community.

She said "My journey from struggling during the pandemic to becoming a successful bag maker and entrepreneur has become an inspiration to many women and girls in my community. To them, I represent hope, resilience, and determination because receiving the right support leads to transformative changes even during the most challenging times of lives".

Aisha with one of her apprentices sewing some bags for sale at her home in wange, Yobe State.  
Photo: UN Women/Olaniyi Aderibige



# ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



**We will keep our palaces open for victims, we will raise our voice and condemn in all totality any act of violence against women and girls.**



Photo: UN Women Nigeria

**HRM. ARC. KING  
ADEDAPPO ADEREMI**

Oba of Ido Osun State



Photo: UN Women/Anthony Abu

## TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND CLERGIES RENEW COMMITMENT TO CURB VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN NIGERIA

**O**n 10 May 2023, UN Women, with support from Ford Foundation, organised a Roundtable with distinguished cultural and faith leaders in Nigeria alongside women's rights organisations (WROs) to escalate collective action to curb violence against women and girls in Nigeria. The roundtable also marked the launch of a Ford Foundation-funded three-year project titled Traditional and Cultural Leaders for Ending GBV by Advancing Advocacy, Policy and Social Norms Change in Nigeria and West Africa (LEAP).

The LEAP project recognises the importance of cultural and faith leaders in preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV). It will leverage the esteemed leaders' extensive knowledge and experiences in their respective jurisdictions to promote an understanding of customs and doctrine denouncing GBV. Studies reveal that traditional and religious leaders play a central role in addressing harmful gendered norms and practices and could act as gatekeepers to enact meaningful social shifts in addressing sexual and gender-based violence and eliminating harmful practices. In Nigeria, for instance, traditional and religious leaders have been at the forefront of the abolishment of harmful practices, including

the Money Wife practice in Ebonyi, East Nigeria; abolition of female genital mutilation in Osun, Southwest Nigeria, and a pronouncement on deposing of leaders found to harbour perpetrators and hide cases of SGBV and in Sokoto, Northwest. Some of these landmark actions have been taken by members of the Council of Traditional Leaders of Africa (COTLA), established in 2018. The COTLA membership in Nigeria, through the support of UN Women, has developed a work plan to support engagement in ending GBV.

The objectives of the Roundtable included deliberating on the role of cultural and faith leaders in collectively shifting norms that perpetuate gender-based violence and identifying avenues for effective prevention and response and sustained investment. Traditional leaders are in a strong position to work with their communities to address the harmful cultural practices that perpetuate negative gender norms and harm women's and girls' health and safety. Working with, rather than against, traditional leaders in Nigeria is crucial to ending violence against women and girls and promoting women's empowerment.

Ford Foundation Executive Vice President, Ms Hilary Pennington, reiterated the crucial role traditional and

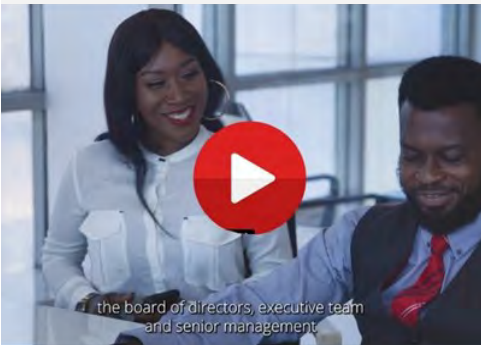
faith leaders play in changing social norms and abolishing harmful cultural practices. She urged participants to take responsibility for imploring measures to prevent violence against women in their constituencies. 'In our recent interventions, 1,329 women and men regularly attended community programs that promote progressive gender-equitable norms. Through these actions, positive behaviours that stop GBV are more likely to be practised. Working with, rather than against, traditional leaders in West Africa is crucial to ending violence against women and girls and promoting women's empowerment, said Beatrice Eyong, UN Women's Country Representative to Nigeria and the ECOWAS.

The traditional leaders who went into closed-door discussions resolved the need to escalate actions against gender-based violence and formulation of policies and laws that would curb the prevalence of violence against women and girls. The esteemed leaders also reiterated the importance of improved sensitisation and community awareness activities.



**UN WOMEN NIGERIA, THROUGH THE EU/UN SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE, WORKS TO CURB THE PREVALENCE OF GBV IN NIGERIA**

EU/UN Spotlight Initiative is working with the Nigerian government, development partners and civil society organizations to promote the development and implementation of policies to curb the prevalence of violence against women and girls.



**UN WOMEN NIGERIA CALL TO ACTION FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES (WEPs)**

A Call to Action for the private sector companies to sign up for WEPs and mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in their policies and operations in Nigeria



**UN WOMEN NIGERIA INTERVENTIONS ENHANCE THE RESILIENCE OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED NORTHEAST**

In a conflict community where education is a luxury reserved for men, resilient women find empowerment and economic independence through the UN Women's Livelihood program, challenging societal norms and paving the way for future generations.



**UN WOMEN NIGERIA EMPOWERS WOMEN AND GIRLS IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED LAKE CHAD**

With funding from the Government of Japan, UN Women Nigeria has provided economic empowerment for women impacted by the conflict in the Lake Chad region, to enable them overcome socio-economic challenges and improve the standard of living for their families.



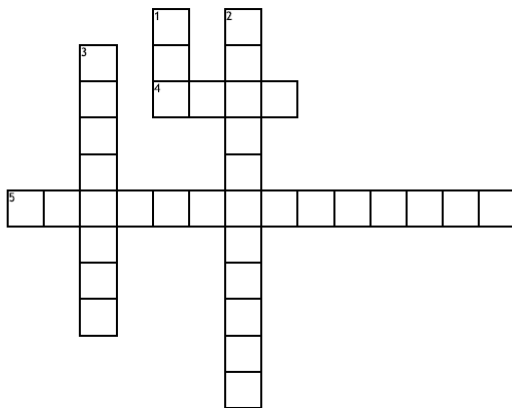
**MANY GENDER EXPERTS  
HAVE WALKED THIS AISLE**

Photo by Chukwuemeka Onyimadu



**Chukwuemeka  
Onyimadu, PhD**

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



### Across

4. The Act criminalizes the following sexual and gender-based violence:- Rape, Spousal Battery, Forceful Ejection from home, Economic Abuse, FGM, Harmful Traditional Practices etc.

5. Sustainable Development goal 5

### Down

1. an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between females and males.

2. Women girls have power and control over their own lives

3. People's capacity to make free and informed decisions about their lives

## THE TIME HAS COME

**Oluoma Ali**

The time has come, to mend the rift,  
To bridge the gaps, bring forth a shift,  
To dance with grace, with arms entwined,  
And cast away the chains that bind.

With open hearts, let us embrace,  
A world where fairness takes its place,  
Where sons and daughters stand side by side,  
Beneath the sky where dreams collide.

In the classrooms, let knowledge bloom,  
With equal opportunity, girls rise from gloom,  
Let education be an equal gate,  
For both boys and girls, a rightful fate.

Let us stand together, hand in hand,  
For gender equality, let our actions be grand,  
Remove the barriers that impede their way,  
Let them rise, empowered, to a brighter day.



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