



# UN WOMEN NIGERIA **ANNUAL REPORT 2020**

Changing the Lives of  
Women and Girls in Nigeria

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>COVID-19</b>	coronavirus disease 2019 (caused by SARS-CoV-2)
<b>CSO</b>	civil society organization
<b>GBV</b>	gender-based violence
<b>GTG</b>	Gender Theme Group
<b>INEC</b>	Independent National Electoral Commission
<b>NAP</b>	National Action Plan
<b>SAP</b>	State Action Plan
<b>SGBV</b>	sexual and gender-based violence
<b>UNSCR</b>	United Nations Security Council Resolution
<b>VAWG</b>	violence against women and girls
<b>WEPs</b>	Women's Empowerment Principles
<b>WPS</b>	women, peace and security

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Throughout 2020, the UN Women Nigeria Country Office worked to sustain the achievements of 2019 in the areas of gender equality and women's empowerment. The year 2020 became more

## FOREWORD

challenging with the outbreak of COVID-19, which had the effect of exacerbating pre-existing gender inequalities in the country. The pandemic added to existing challenges: the volatile security situation in the North East, and increasing insecurity in the North West and Middle Belt regions.

In 2020, in line with its three-pronged mandate, UN Women implemented programmatic, coordination and normative interventions as a contribution to addressing the inherent inequalities between men and women from different angles. UN Women worked to strengthen women's increased and substantive representation in political, economic and social life, particularly in the humanitarian, peacebuilding and development contexts.

In the area of women's political empowerment, UN Women Nigeria's interventions focused on addressing the low political representation of women in politics through mainstreaming gender equality in the ongoing constitutional reforms ahead of the 2023 elections. UN Women supported the work of civil society organizations to demand the passing of equality bills that promote the equal representation of women in politics, including the Women's Fair Representation Bill, which advocates for at least 30 per cent representation of women in governance.

The Country Office also invested in the economic empowerment of women in order to address the gender inequalities women and girls face due to negative cultural and social norms that keep women in poverty. Women farmers were provided access to improved farming inputs and post-harvest technologies; conflict-affected women and other rural women were supported with income-generating skills and start-up kits for improving their livelihoods; and those women worst affected by COVID-19 received palliatives and cash assistance to overcome the shocks to their livelihoods and businesses.

With the work and influence of UN Women and partners in 2020, Nigeria 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. At the end of the year, the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law had been passed in 28 out of 36 states, and the abolishment of the 'money woman'<sup>1</sup> harmful practice in some communities had been attained. Governors of the country's 36 states issued a joint state of emergency declaration on sexual and gender-based violence to address the rising cases of SGBV during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Advocacy actions by women's movements, civil society organizations and gender advocates have also multiplied, along with actions by various community members,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Money woman' refers to a harmful practice in which young girls are given away to settle debts owed by parents or grandparents.

religious leaders and traditional rulers, to prevent and respond to GBV. An increase in GBV reporting and use of One Stop Centres was also recorded.

The UN Women Nigeria Country Office equally worked to enhance women's capacities to influence conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, as well as humanitarian action and recovery efforts. For the women, peace and security component, UN Women implemented interventions for increasing women's effective participation in peace and security processes; moving towards gender-sensitive security sector institutions for gender-responsive operations; and improving public perceptions regarding the role of women in peace and security. Achievements were recorded in localizing United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 at the state level, raising awareness about the implementation of related action plans, and enhancing the capacity of security sector and other actors for adequate implementation of the UNSCR action plans.

As pertains to humanitarian action, 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.

UN Women Nigeria also continued to advocate for the application of global norms for gender equality and women's empowerment. The commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, along with the launch of the Generation Equality campaign in Nigeria, constituted key entry points for advocacy on the 12 themes of the Beijing Declaration. Partnerships and joint actions were implemented to influence normative change through the celebration of International Women's Day, the implementation of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign, and the mobilization of male community members to support gender equality.

Several repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic were felt in different aspects of the country's political, economic and social lives during the year. Women were reported to be disproportionately affected due to already existing gender inequalities. Emerging evidence has indicated a sharp rise in GBV during the lockdowns that were imposed to control the spread of COVID-19. The pandemic and associated restrictions have also further reduced economic opportunities for many women, especially those who lost income after their businesses had to close.

While the outbreak of COVID-19 posed a major challenge for programme implementation in 2020, the Nigeria Country Office seized the opportunity to adopt programmatic shifts to adjust to the situation in a manner that responded to both existing and new

challenges while working closely with other UN agencies and the Government of Nigeria for coordinated efforts. Related interventions ranged from providing the correct information about COVID-19 to women and girls to enable them to protect themselves and family members and access essential services; reaching out to vulnerable women in poor communities with palliatives and cash support; providing coordination for the development and dissemination of knowledge products to guide gender mainstreaming in response and recovery plans; and enhancing women's leadership and decision making in COVID-19 response and recovery.

We remain grateful for the partnership support of all donors and the collaboration of our sister UN agencies and other development partners, most importantly the Government and people of Nigeria, especially the women and girls, whose rights and equality we continue to champion.

We invite you to join the Nigeria Country Office team in celebrating the 2020 achievements while the team continues to work for more in 2021 and advances in the journey towards equality between men and women by 2030.



**Comfort Lamptey**  
Representative of UN Women to Nigeria and ECOWAS



# INTRODUCTION

This report highlights UN Women Nigeria's work for the year 2020. The report builds around the Nigeria Country Office programmatic areas of intervention and reflects the achievements attained in collaboration with various government and non-governmental partners who contributed to policy advocacy efforts, delivery of services, implementation, and funding of interventions aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The population at large (men, women, boys and girls) of Nigeria played a great role in these achievements in different capacities as contributors to and agents of the change experienced in 2020.

## About Nigeria

With an estimated population of 206,139,589 in 2020 and a growth rate of 2.62 per cent,<sup>1</sup> the Federal Republic of Nigeria consists of 6 geopolitical zones divided into 36 states. The majority of the Nigerian population is young, with 45.7 per cent under 15 years<sup>2</sup> and 31.7 per cent between the ages of 10 and 24 years, reflecting a high dependency ratio of 98 per cent.<sup>3</sup> Women and men constituted 49.3 per cent and 50.7 per cent of the population respectively.

1 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). *World Population Prospects 2019*.  
2 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO.ZS?locations=NG>.  
3 <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/portal-document/N1723922.pdf>.

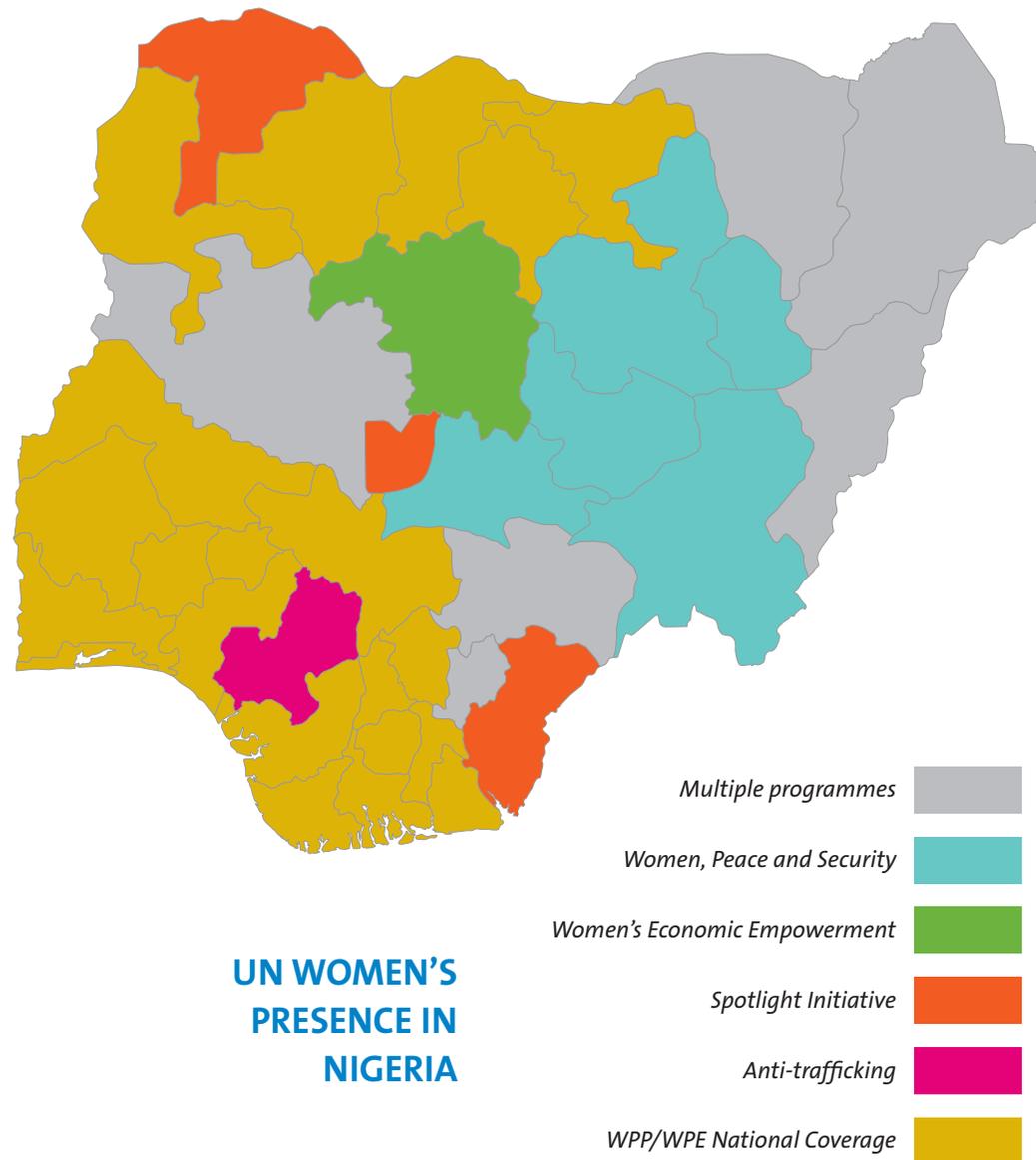
## Brief Overview of Gender Inequality in Nigeria

A review of the Gender Inequality Index, which measures gender-based inequalities in reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity, shows that Nigeria has not made significant progress in the last five years. In terms of reproductive health, Nigeria has the second-highest rate of maternal mortality globally, at 512 per 1,000 live births.<sup>4</sup> On empowerment, which is measured by the share of parliamentary seats held by women and men, the data shows that women's share of elective positions was as low as 6.5 per cent in the 2019 elections. The 2016 Gender Inequality Index was 0.635, which represents a 63.5 per cent loss in human development potential due to gender inequality. The nation also has a very low Gender Development Index ranking – 157 out of 189 countries in 2017.

## UN Women Nigeria's Focus in 2020

In 2020, the Nigeria Country Office worked to support the Government of Nigeria's national priorities, including the empowerment of women and girls, and contributed to all areas of economic, political and social development. In line with the global thematic areas of advancing gender equality and women's empowerment as a core mandate to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN Women Nigeria implemented various programmes within four

<sup>4</sup> National Population Commission [Nigeria] and ICF (2019). *Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2018*. Abuja, Nigeria, and Rockville, Maryland, USA.



priority areas: Women’s Political Empowerment, Women’s Economic Empowerment, Women, Peace and Security (WPS), and Ending Violence against Women and Girls. The programmatic interventions in the four thematic areas were complemented by interventions aimed at supporting the country’s normative and coordination work in gender equality at the country level.

## Implementation Context in 2020

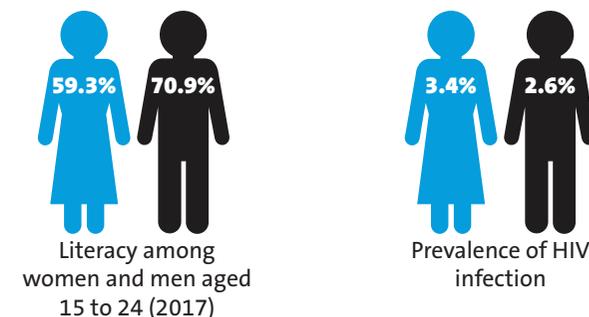
In 2020, Nigeria faced multiple security challenges, with armed robbery, farmer–herder conflict and attacks by Boko Haram insurgents recorded in different parts of the country, especially in the North East. Widespread disruptive protests occurred against the Nigeria Police Force’s Special Anti-Robbery Squad (known as SARS), with demands for reforms in the security sector and overall governance. The squad had long been accused of human rights violations, including violence against women and girls.

Nigeria was also highly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with differentiated impacts on women in various aspects of life. However, in the pandemic response, women portrayed exemplary leadership as frontline healthcare workers, in the business sector and at the community level, despite their low representation in COVID-19 response and recovery decision-making processes.

The pandemic, a collapse in oil prices and the violent anti-SARS protests severely impacted the Nigerian

economy. Lockdown measures hit the private sector badly and disproportionately affected women-owned businesses, which accounted for 47.8 per cent of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the formal sector and over 82 per cent in the informal sector. Increased stress and tensions amplified intimate partner and domestic violence, in a context of relatively limited prevention mechanisms and response services.

## Status of Women in Nigeria\*



## Representation of women in parliament 1999–2019

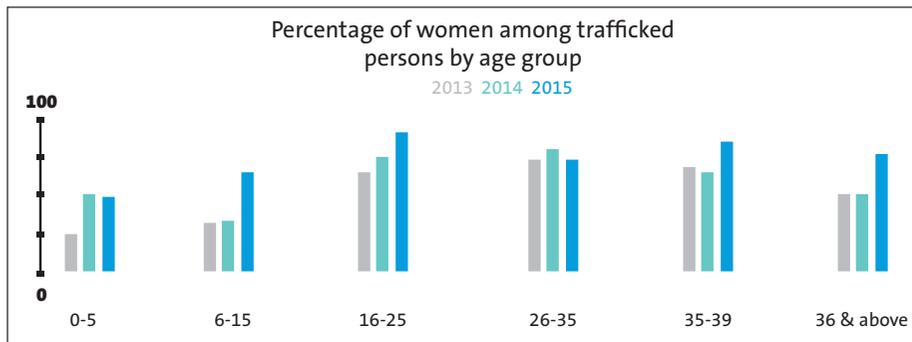
Election Year	No. of Seats	Senate				House of Representatives				
		Men	%	Women	%	Seats	Men	%	Women	%
1999	109	106	97.2	3	2.8	360	347	96.4	13	3.6
2003	109	105	96.3	4	3.7	360	339	94.2	21	5.8
2007	109	100	91.7	9	8.3	360	333	92.5	27	7.5
2011	109	102	93.5	7	6.5	360	335	93.1	25	6.9
2015	109	102	93.5	7	6.5	360	338	94	22	6
2019	109	102	93.5	8	7.3	360	350	97.2	15	4.1

Women in Governance

## Appointive ministerial positions by sex (1999–2015)

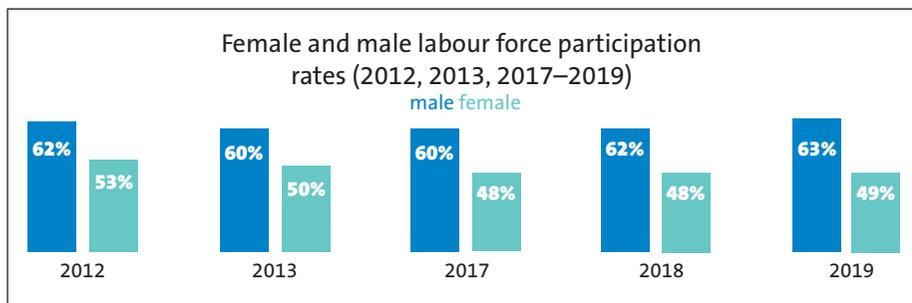


\*Data in this subsection is from the National Bureau of Statistics, UN Women, WHO, and UNICEF.



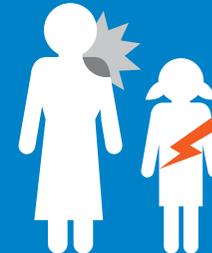
Number of judges in federal court by court, year and sex

Court	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Supreme Court of Nigeria	11	3	13	3	13	3	13	3	14	3	11	4
Court of Appeal	48	17	52	19	49	17	63	25	61	26	53	26
Federal High Court	43	16	40	15	45	20	38	17	36	17	57	23
National Industrial Court	5	3	5	3	11	9	11	9	11	8	11	8



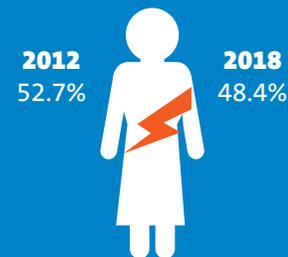
## Violence against Women

Prevalence of violence against women



Lifetime physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence: 17.4%  
Child marriage: 43%

Women who had any form of female genital mutilation/cutting



# WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

Inclusive governance and achievement of human rights depend on equal participation of all citizens, both men and women, in political leadership and decision making. However, in Nigeria the representation of women in decision-making structures stood at 4 per cent in the national parliament and 4.43 per cent in state legislatures. Only 16.2 per cent of ministerial appointments in 2020 were of women.

To address the issue of women's low representation in political leadership, UN Women Nigeria supported interventions that make ongoing constitutional and policy reforms gender responsive in order to create a conducive electoral environment for women candidates ahead of the 2023 elections. Technical support was also provided to relevant institutions and organizations to advocate for and support gender-responsive reforms that tackle the current barriers to women's participation in politics.

## Key Achievements

- A gender-friendly electoral environment for female candidates was promoted through national CSOs' consultations and dialogue with the electoral management body (INEC) to discuss women's rights in the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria. The consultations reached a consensus



*Left to right: Felicia Onibon, President, 100 Women's Lobby Group; Barrister Hauwa Shekarau, Executive Director, WOLDI; Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS; Barrister Ebere Ifendu, President, Women in Politics Forum; HE Dame Pauline Tallen OFR KSG, Honorable Minister of Women Affairs; Prof. Taiye Okoosi-Simbine, INEC National Commissioner; Honorable Aishatu J. Dukku, Chair, House of Representatives Committee on Electoral Matters; Prof. Joy Onyesoh, President, WILPF; and Blessing Obidegwu, INEC Deputy Director for Gender.*



Group photo of participants at the Young Women's Political Academy. Photo by WIP.

- on the need for gender quotas to promote parity in political representation and an outline of specific practical measures for applying the quota system in the next elections.
- A bill drafted with the support of UN Women to increase women's representation in parliament was adopted by CSOs and presented by the Nigerian House of Representatives Committee on Electoral Matters. Further, female legislators in the House of Representatives formed a caucus to push for the adoption of the Women's Fair Representation Bill in the ongoing constitutional review process. The bill advocates for at least 30 per cent representation of women in governance.
- Federal- and state-level female lawmakers in Nigeria have increased their knowledge and skills on drafting and advocating for gender-sensitive reforms in parliament following a two-day physical-cum-virtual training workshop organized by UN Women in collaboration with the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies.
- The Senate Constitutional Review Committee was accompanied in the process to review the current constitution from a gender perspective and draft bills for amending provisions that have so far impeded progress towards gender equality and women's rights.
- Stakeholder consultations were supported for advancing gender-responsive legal reforms. Through these consultations and UN Women's technical guidance, recommendations were made for amending constitutional provisions



*A cross-section of participants during the training for female legislators on gender-responsive legislation.*

that have long impeded the passage of other gender parity laws, including the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill. UN Women's support towards the passing of the bill consisted of a review of the bill's contents while also addressing the constitutional limitations related to its passage.

- One hundred young women in Benue and Cross River States were equipped with skills to actively engage in politics and join the political parties of their choice as a result of a training academy on political leadership organized by UN Women in collaboration with the Women in Politics Forum.

- A two-part documentary on Nigerian women's leadership role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic was produced. The documentary relates key messages from women leaders on the specific impact of COVID-19 on women and girls, the importance of women's leadership, and actions taken by exceptional women leaders in response to the pandemic. Seventeen diverse women are featured in the documentary, including youth, educators and those in government, civil society and the private sector.

## QUOTAS: WOMEN IN ELECTIONS

Recommended measures for applying the quota system in the next elections that emerged from consultations between UN Women and women rights organizations and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs (November 2020) included the following:

- Determining the constituencies to field female candidates or those to be designated as women-only in any general election
- INEC to publish the list of senatorial zones and federal and state constituencies fielding female candidates two years before any general election
- INEC to make gender equality/quotas a mandatory prerequisite for the registration of new political parties, regularly evaluate the implementation of gender quotas, and introduce sanctions (where the Constitution or Electoral Act permits) for non-compliance and/or incentives for political parties to voluntarily adopt a higher gender quota
- INEC to report to the President/National Assembly about the implementation status of the electoral gender quota law and make proposals for improvements

## IMPACT STORY: Nnyen Adomi

Nnyen Adomi is from Cross River State, Nigeria. She grew up in the Local Government Area of Obubra, where feminists are tagged as witches (*ozan*). In her words, “women who dare to dream and achieve it are considered *ozan*”. Adomi has always been interested in politics and political participation. Her first venture into political activism was vying for the position of Director of Sports Faculty at the University of Uyo. She lost the elections mainly because she was female.

“I was told I could never win as a woman and that women cannot bear the pains of losing an election. That is why the game of politics is meant for men only. I went ahead to contest and threw a party to celebrate my loss, because where I am from, even running as a woman should be celebrated as an achievement. I did that because I felt I had finally conquered the fear of failure.” This response drew the attention of her faculty, where she was eventually appointed as a woman leader.

As a woman interested in politics, Adomi says she always stayed abreast of political news. Having seen an online advertisement for the Young Women’s Political Academy, she was determined to further her understanding of political processes and what it would take to scale her state’s political structures. Through the training provided by the Women in Politics Forum with support from UN Women, Adomi, in a cohort of 25 other young women, acquired the requisite skills, which included mobilizing women at the grass roots to gain their support in electoral campaigns; managing and using traditional and social media to drive campaigns and solicit funds; and effectively engaging the media to promote a positive brand image and her manifesto.

“Equipped with these skills,” she says, “I was motivated, empowered and encouraged to contest for a position within the Cross River State Youth Parliament, as well as the position of Chief Whip.” After a rigorous campaign, Adomi was elected as the female whip in the Cross River State Youth Parliament, and is currently serving as the Chief Whip. According to her, “With more women in these spaces of power, I am convinced that we will see a shift in our democracy – one that is more inclusive and does not leave anyone behind.”



# WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Gender inequalities in the Nigerian economy are reflected in the limited access by women to economic opportunities. Women are overrepresented in insecure low-paying jobs (84.8 per cent) compared to men (71.7 per cent),<sup>1</sup> and are underrepresented in overall labour force participation (47.8 per cent for women compared to 57.8 per cent for men). Further, limited credit access constrains women who want to establish and run businesses. For instance, 77 per cent of men, but only 23 per cent of women, own bank accounts; only 21.5 per cent of female business owners save in a bank, compared to 32.5 per cent of male business owners.

Gender gaps in access to information and technology also limit women's ability to cope with current trends and business digitalization. Overall, 62 per cent of men in Nigeria know about mobile internet, against only 45 per cent of women.<sup>2</sup>

In 2020, the Nigeria Country Office's main areas of intervention to promote women's economic empowerment included supporting women farmers' inclusion at all stages of agriculture value chains, social protection interventions for the most

1 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SLEMPVULN.FE.ZS?locations=NG>.

2 <https://www.oecd.org/digital/bridging-the-digital-gender-divide.pdf>.



*Women rice farmers in Ohaozara Local Government Area practicing the fertilizer line application they just learned under the instruction of an extension agent.*

vulnerable women, and promoting gender equality in the private sector. A main focus was on enhancing the capacity of women farmers to increase agricultural production. Farmers were trained on the use of agricultural inputs and technologies, and later on were provided with improved post-harvest handling technologies to minimize harvest waste.

UN Women also invested in off-farm livelihood activities for conflict-affected women in order to improve resilience in the conflict, humanitarian and COVID-19 contexts. The supported women have increased their household income and reduced their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse.

## Key Achievements

### Enhancing Women Farmers' Production and Post-Harvest Handling Capacities

- 11,130 women smallholder farmers improved cooperative governance and financial management in Borno State.
- 1,370 women, consisting of community leaders and cooperative members, in the North East of Nigeria acquired new business development, supply chain and leadership skills.
- 75 women from farming communities and the State Ministries of Agriculture and Women Affairs were trained as trainers to act as agricultural extension workers in Ebonyi State.
- 540 conflict-affected women from Yobe and Borno States acquired new skills on high-value

post-harvest improved parboiling technology for rice. These women were integrated into cooperatives for the improved management and expansion of rice-processing businesses.

- Three 300-kilogram rice-milling machines with 22-kVA generators were provided to women farmers after training on post-harvest improved parboiling technology in three Local Government Areas in Yobe and Borno States.
- 40 female entrepreneurs and cooperative members from Niger State acquired new skills in branding, making soap and cosmetics, and processing shea butter for local and international markets.

### Improving Livelihoods for Conflict-Affected and Rural Women

One hundred thirty-six conflict-affected women improved their livelihoods through income generation training they received at the integrated Women's Empowerment Hub in Maiduguri. UN Women established the centre in collaboration with the Government of Borno State through the Ministry of Women Affairs to serve as a safe space to improve knowledge on gender equality and women's rights, prevention of GBV, reconciliation, resilience, and de-radicalization to facilitate reintegration. The hub also serves as a space for women to acquire livelihood skills, making them more resilient to the ravaging effects of the armed violence in the North East and consequent displacements.



*The Honourable Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen, receives a cheque from Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, intended to cushion vulnerable women from the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.*



*Small-scale women farmers processing shea nuts in Niger State.*

## Supporting Vulnerable Women during the Pandemic

In collaboration with sister UN agencies, UN Women implemented a joint programme focusing on risk communication and community engagement with financial support from the One-UN COVID-19 Basket Fund. Under this programme, 44 community-based accountability platforms were put in place to ensure fairness and transparency in cash distribution processes. These 44 women-led Community Watch Groups are working to monitor cash distributions in communities across 20 LGAs of the 10 programme focus states. The 10,000 recipients of the unconditional cash assistance will receive 10,000 naira each by the end of the programme. Alternative sources of income were also created for women affected by both COVID-19 and conflicts.

Women's and girls' vulnerabilities to COVID-19 and SGBV were also addressed through the implementation of a Second Chance Education programme, in which approximately 7,429 women who were forced to drop out of school attended literacy and numeracy classes, including through radio programmes (due to COVID-19 restrictions). These women also benefitted from training on practical vocational skills.



*Hajiya Amina, a beneficiary of the Women's Empowerment Hub, who used the skills acquired and assistance received for livestock farming.*

*A beneficiary receives a cheque as part of the unconditional cash assistance intervention under the Risk Communication and Community Engagement project*



## UN Women Responds to the COVID-19 Economic Shock

To engender the COVID-19 economic recovery agenda in Nigeria, UN Women conducted a preliminary gender analysis of the country's Bounce Back programme. At the end of 2020, consultations with the Ministry of Finance were in progress to explore partnering on a policy dialogue to discuss the results. The policy dialogue would also aim to identify policy and programmatic actions for addressing gender impacts during the post-COVID-19 recovery, as well as actions for analysing and monitoring the economic stimulus packages from a gender perspective. In parallel, UN Women Nigeria developed advocacy briefs and shared them with key women's groups.

Cash and palliative support were also provided to vulnerable women affected by COVID-19. With UN

Women support, and in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and other key partners, 15,300 vulnerable women and girls from 3,060 households selected from 17 states have benefited from the distribution of food items and hygiene products. The intervention also provided an opportunity to advocate for affirmative procurement and promote women in business.

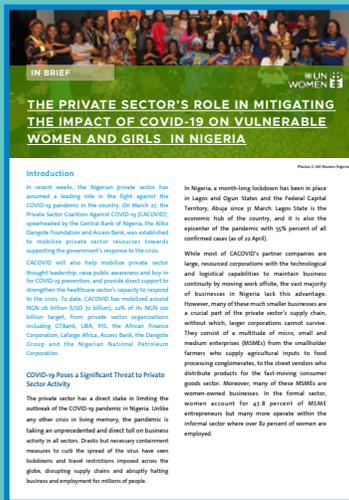
Two joint programmes were submitted for funding to the One-UN COVID-19 Basket Fund: 1) Risk Communication and Community Engagement and 2) Strengthening the Capacity of Local Enterprises/Manufacturers to Produce High-Quality Personal Protective Equipment and Healthcare-Related Products. While UN Women received funding of US\$ 1.3 million in 2020 for implementing the first programme, the second programme was approved for funding in 2021.

Under the first programme, 44 community-based accountability platforms (Community Watch Groups) were put in place in the 10 focus states. The first phase of unconditional cash transfers to vulnerable women worst affected by COVID-19 started in December 2020, with the goal of reaching 10,000 individuals by the end of the programme. This programme provided for women's financial inclusion, as the majority of women beneficiaries had never accessed a bank account before. The cash assistance beneficiaries were identified through the National Social Register of the National Social Safety Net Coordinating Office in the target states. In addition, 7,429 women benefitted from vocational training under a Second Chance Education programme.

## The Private Sector and the Response to COVID-19

According to PricewaterhouseCoopers, Nigeria has an almost even balance between males and females in the labour force. However, in the micro-business space, women account for only 23 per cent of formal business ownership; men are more than three times more likely than women to be employees. Female board members make up 19 per cent of the total board composition across the various sectors listed on the stock exchange. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Women Affairs in 2020, 98 per cent of women-owned businesses in Nigeria either scaled back or shut down because of COVID-19; 51–70 per cent have experienced a decline in sales and revenue; 31 per cent of women reduced the time spent on running their businesses due to increased care demands (children, the elderly and other loved ones) at home; 33 per cent of women-owned businesses lost customers with the transition to digital operations; and 24 per cent of women-owned businesses were aware they needed to go digital, but were not sure where/how to start.

Private sector companies' limited awareness of gender issues often translates into slow adoption of the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs). Between March and December 2020, only 24 had signed the WEPs. The private sector's alignment to and discharge of corporate social responsibility initiatives that address SGBV and harmful practices against women and girls was also low.



Spearheaded by the Central Bank of Nigeria, the Aliko Dangote Foundation and Access Bank, the private sector established the Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVIC) in March 2020 to mobilize private sector resources towards supporting the government's response to the crisis. CACOVIC has mobilized around 26 billion naira (US\$ 72 million), 22 per cent of its 120-billion-naira target, from private sector organizations, including Guaranty Trust Bank, United Bank for Africa, IHS Towers, the Africa Finance Corporation, Lafarge Africa, Access Bank, the Dangote Group and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation.

UN Women produced a policy brief laying out possible ways CACOVIC could make their work more gender sensitive. The brief recommended specific measures: allocation of 20 per cent of CACOVIC's overall resources to supporting the humanitarian and socio-economic recovery



(Left to right) Ihinosen Ebinum, Associate Director of Procter and Gamble; Bolaji Balogun, Chairman of Lafarge and Co-Chair of the Private Sector Advisory Group on the SDGs; Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Country Representative; Thelma Ekiyor, Chairperson, Afrigrants; and Peter Thomas, Deputy Head of Mission, British Deputy High Commission, Lagos, at a meeting to discuss the role of the private sector in promoting gender-responsive procurement practices.



Facilitators preparing for the private sector training on workplace harassment, GBV and the WEPs in Lagos.

needs of the most vulnerable women and girls affected by the crisis; signing the UN Women/UN Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles; supporting women-owned businesses, particularly in the informal sector, with affirmative procurement to provide essential supplies during the crisis; and ending SGBV and violence against women, a central pillar of companies' corporate social responsibility activities.

## UN Women Boosts the Private Sector's Knowledge about the Women's Empowerment Principles

As a result of UN Women's capacity-building sessions in March 2020, 33 representatives from 18 private sector companies reported having increased capacity to understand gender concepts and frameworks, the behaviours, actions and conditions they reference, and their relevance to practices in the private sector. They were supported to illustrate business cases for supporting gender equality and women's empowerment in the private sector and to explore the intersection between aspects of the WEPs – in particular Principle 3 on health, safety and freedom from violence – and the Spotlight Initiative's focal areas of eliminating violence against women, SGBV and harmful traditional practices.

If they were not already aware, participants became acquainted with UN Women's private sector tools and initiatives, including HeForShe and the Unstereotype Alliance, as well as the WEPs, and how these tools can be more effectively harnessed by the private sector in Nigeria. Participants learned about the negative impact of SGBV and harmful practices on businesses' operating environment and their implications for business sustainability. Participants increased their skills in how to address the specific needs of individual companies or segments of the private sector regarding women's empowerment.

After the training, a number of companies started the process of joining the WEPs, expressing an interest in developing a targeted training module for their company.



*Participants at the training for the private sector on the Women's Empowerment Principles, March 2020, Lagos.*

# ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Gender-based violence has remained dominant in Nigeria due to deep-rooted inequalities between men and women. GBV has been exacerbated by insurgency activities in the North East in which women and girls are abducted, raped and subjected to forced marriage. Thirty per cent of women aged 15 to 49 have reported experiences of sexual abuse, with a marked divide between girls and women in urban areas (33 per cent) and rural areas (24 per cent).<sup>1</sup>

Nigeria has the largest number of child brides in Africa and one of the highest prevalence rates in the world: 23 million girls and women were married as children.<sup>2</sup> Currently, 43 per cent of girls are married before the age of 18, and 17 per cent are married before they turn 15. Nigeria accounts for the third-highest number of women and girls who have undergone female genital mutilation, with a prevalence of 25 per cent. An estimated 20,000 new cases of obstetric fistula occur every year.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2016–2017.

<sup>3</sup> Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls: Country Programme Document Nigeria.



UN Women Nigeria Country Representative Comfort Lamptey with traditional and religious leaders at the high-level meeting of the Council of Traditional/Cultural Leaders of Africa Nigeria Chapter.

The programme area for ending violence against women and girls in Nigeria is implemented through two major programmes: the Prevention of Forced Migration and Trafficking in Women and Girls in Nigeria and the Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls.

Through the two programmes, UN Women implemented interventions aimed at ensuring that laws and policies are in place to address violence against women and girls (VAWG) and other harmful practices; institutions are adequately capacitated to prevent and respond to VAWG; gender inequitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours change to prevent VAWG; women and girls who experience violence use available, accessible, acceptable and quality essential services for recovery from violence; SGBV data is collected and managed for evidence-based advocacy and monitoring; and women's advocates and organizations effectively influence and advance processes on gender equality, women's empowerment and ending VAWG.

## Key Achievements

### Achievements through the Prevention of Forced Migration and Trafficking in Women and Girls Programme

*Policy instruments on migration were formulated/ adapted to prevent trafficking in women and girls.*

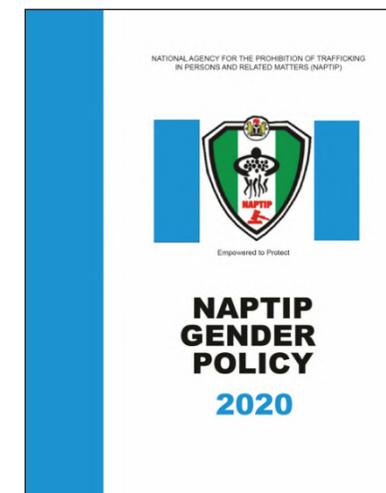
A gender policy for the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP)

was developed, reviewed and validated through engagements with the law enforcement agency and stakeholders involved in the prevention of trafficking in humans. To ensure that the policy is an actionable document, a three-year implementation strategy was also produced. Additional technical support was also provided to facilitate a gender review of the following policy documents:

- The 2008 National Policy on Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria
- The National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons (2021–2025)
- The Strategic Framework for the Development of the National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons in Nigeria (2021–2025)
- The Trafficking in Persons Law Enforcement and Administration Act (as amended in 2015)
- Guidelines on the National Referral Mechanism for Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria (2014)
- The Standard Operating Procedures for Coordination of Law Enforcement Response to Human Trafficking in Nigeria, 2017

The following state-level laws and policies were also reviewed from a gender perspective:

- The Edo State Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Law, 2018



- The Edo State Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law, 2019
- The Edo State institutional framework – The Task Force (now Committee) on Human Trafficking

*Key institutions' capacities were mapped in preparation for capacity-building interventions in these institutions for gender-friendly protection services for women and girl survivors in source migration trafficking sites.*

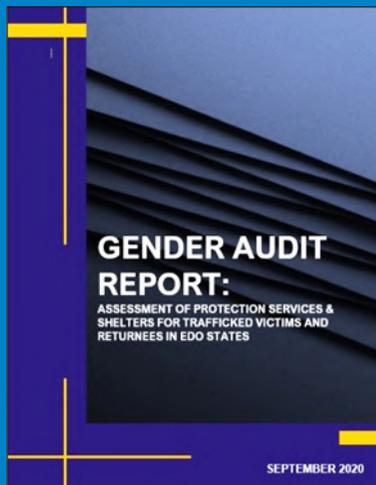
The mapping led to the following results:

- Gender audits of shelters for survivors of human trafficking operated by service providers and

## Gender Audit Reports

The dissemination of the gender audit reports in the two project states resulted in the following:

- Increased public awareness and information on the gender audit of homes and shelters for victims of trafficking in Edo and Lagos States.
- Increased stakeholder knowledge of gaps in the services of homes and shelters for victims of trafficking.
- Increased stakeholder knowledge on referral pathways for handling trafficked survivors.



law enforcement agencies in Edo and Lagos States were completed and four related reports produced, validated and disseminated.

- Reviewed and validated findings and recommendations from the gender audits were made available to guide the production of training tools to address the capacity gaps of relevant stakeholders and the amendment of policies and practices for effective rehabilitation and reintegration of human trafficking victims.

### **Achievements through the Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls**

*An increase in political will and women CSOs' interest to implement laws and policies for SGBV prevention and response in Nigeria*

A heightened cognizance of SGBV as one of the most extreme forms of systemic inequality experienced by women and girls was achieved through a high-level town hall meeting on the elimination of violence against women and girls attended by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, HE Muhammadu Buhari, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Muhammed, EU Commissioner Janez Lenarcic and other high-level dignitaries in Nigeria. In his special message, President Buhari called for an end to violence against women and children and referred to the newly established inter-ministerial management committee on the eradication of gender-based violence as a positive move towards achieving this commitment.

Moreover, several legal reforms to address GBV were undertaken. The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act was passed in Yobe State on 22 December 2020, and the Prevention, Prohibition and Redress of Sexual Harassment in Tertiary Educational Institutions Bill (2019) was passed by the Nigerian Senate and is pending the House of Representatives' passage. In the meantime, guidelines for the prevention of and response to school-related GBV in tertiary institutions were drafted and approved for implementation in six tertiary institutions (three in Lagos and three in Abuja).

Women's human rights capacities to influence laws and policies have also increased. Four women's human rights organizations (Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative or WRAPA, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre, and the International Federation of Women Lawyers or FIDA Nigeria) contributed to developing laws and policies in Sokoto and Adamawa States, and advocated for a gender-responsive legal framework that equally protects the rights of women. This resulted in developing the draft Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law (2015) for Adamawa State, which passed its first reading in December 2020.

The capacities of 470 women's rights defenders were also built through developing policies that guarantee their ability to advance the human rights agenda. Additional training on advocacy for and



Women demanding the domestication and implementation of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act.

monitoring of the implementation of gender laws and policies was conducted for a network of 47 CSOs from 6 Spotlight Initiative states, who committed to prioritizing advocacy for the implementation of the National Action Plan on GBV in their respective states.

Knowledge and advocacy on gender budgeting was enhanced in 2020, along with related commitments from key actors. Adamawa and Ebonyi States made firm commitments to gender-sensitive budgeting and allocated budget lines to SGBV issues in their 2021 budgets after 2,650 women's rights advocates were trained on integrating VAWG issues into development plans and budgets. Gender officers from the Ministries of Women Affairs from the six Spotlight Initiative states have also enhanced their gender budgeting skills as a result of focused training.

Likewise, the knowledge and capacities of 89 parliamentarians (including 12 women) in Sokoto, Ebonyi, Adamawa and Cross River States were enhanced through training and the provision of tools on gender-responsive budgeting. Furthermore, the capacity to advocate for gender budgeting and monitor budget allocation and utilization has increased for 650 women's rights advocates, including 8 media organizations, from 3 Spotlight Initiative states (Lagos, Cross River and Ebonyi). In Lagos State, beneficiaries participated in a symbolic walk to the State House of Assembly to demand a comprehensive law to end VAWG, a gender-responsive budget and the provision of resources for ending VAWG.

By involving community leaders and implementing targeted interventions, the programme influenced a change in community social norms, attitudes and behaviours. Traditional and religious leaders made strong commitments on preventing VAW and harmful practices, including the pronouncement made by the paramount ruler of Obanliku Local Government Area and the clan head of the Becheve Kingdom to abolish customs inimical to women and girls, including the long tradition of ‘money woman’.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> ‘Money woman’ refers to a harmful practice in which young girls are given away to settle debts owed by parents or grandparents.

The commitments also came as a result of a high-level virtual round-table conference titled The Role of Traditional Leaders in Ending Violence against Women and Girls in the Midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic, held on 6 August 2020. At the same round table, an accountability framework was developed for guiding religious and traditional leaders (and their civil society partners) in their interventions on SGBV prevention and response. Further changes were influenced by enhancing the capacities of CSOs and women’s organizations on

the use of the Social Analysis and Action approach<sup>5</sup> in communities.

Community surveillance groups and platforms of men and youth against GBV were created. In Lagos and Sokoto, the surveillance teams have commenced making referrals to One Stop Centres and ensuring survivors’ access to justice. In Adamawa, Sokoto, Ebonyi, Cross River and the Federal Capital Territory, 72 anti-GBV men’s platforms and women’s rights

<sup>5</sup> The Social Analysis and Action approach aims to transform gender norms and is a tool to support communities to challenge harmful social norms, beliefs and practices.



Participants at the launch of the Nana Khadija One Stop Centre in Sokoto State.

defenders' networks were formed and have been fighting VAWG in their domains.

*The delivery of life-saving services to GBV survivors was carried out through two One Stop Centres.* The Nana Khadija One Stop Centre was established in Sokoto State, while the Mirabel Centre in Lagos was supported to provide essential services to GBV survivors. At the end of 2020, the two centres had provided timely life-saving medical and psychosocial support services to 1,090 clients (including 19 persons with disabilities).

*Capacities for GBV data collection were enhanced.* Forty-two gender and social welfare focal officers in Federal and State Ministries of Women Affairs are now able to collect qualitative data for advocacy and policymaking in line with international standards through training and data collection tools developed for monitoring state-level activities on SGBV, harmful practices, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. Moreover, UN Women supported various data collection efforts of the government in the Federal Capital Territory and Lagos State.

*Gender advocates, women's organizations and their advocacy initiatives for ending GBV were strengthened.*

- The capacities of 460 women's rights organizations, autonomous social movements and civil society organizations were enhanced to



*A cross-section of women participating in the Second Chance Education intervention in Ezza South community, Ebonyi State, Nigeria.*

- jointly advocate for ending VAWG across all the Spotlight Initiative states. Additionally, 150 women's rights advocates increased their capacity to engage with ministries, departments and agencies and demand accountability on SGBV, harmful practices, and sexual and reproductive health and rights as a result of trainings conducted by the Spotlight Initiative.
- At least 528 persons from women's rights organizations and CSOs, as well as persons living with

disability and individual advocates for women's and girls' rights, across all Spotlight Initiative states have increased their capacity to monitor and assess the Sustainable Development Goal benchmarks after completing relevant capacity-building sessions.

- In Ebonyi and Cross River States, GBV and sexual and reproductive health and rights networks were established, consisting of members of CSOs, women's groups and associations, and

vulnerable groups, as well as individual advocates and persons living with disability. The networks issued a joint advocacy statement on GBV prevention in commemoration of International Day of Rural Women and International Day of the Girl Child, and are serving as a source of data on GBV. They are key players in the response to GBV cases.

- Voices of women’s movements were amplified to advocate for issues on VAWG through the issuing of three joint statements. The statements included: a national policy advisory for COVID-19 response endorsed by 283 women’s organizations; a national joint statement to reinforce demands for ending VAWG in commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, which was endorsed by 353 women’s organizations and 287 individuals; and a statement to demand a review of the Domestic Violence Law of Lagos State and a call for resources to implement the law, which was endorsed by 241 organizations in Lagos State.

### HeForShe Campaign Initiatives Launched

In 2020, UN Women launched the HeForShe campaign in Lagos State on 28 January 2020, with a focus on the trafficking of women and girls. In Bauchi and Benue States, HeForShe networks of over 100 men from various sectors (the legislature, the judiciary, government ministries/departments/agencies, security institutions, traditional and religious



*Honourable Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu, Governor of Lagos State, officially signs on as a HeForShe champion.*

institutions, youth groups, CSOs and the media) were established for the promotion of gender equality and the WPS agenda. These HeForShe champions are now actively engaged in mobilizing

and sensitizing other men to contribute to efforts to end gender-based violence and promote women’s meaningful engagement in decision making, including in peace and security.



*The First Lady of Lagos State, Dr. Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu, at the HeForShe event in Lagos State.*

## Tackling SGBV during the COVID-19 Lockdown

During the year, a significant increase in SGBV cases was recorded, including the rape and killing of young girls. According to reports by partners implementing the Spotlight Initiative, SGBV cases during lockdown increased by an unprecedented 300 per cent.

An op-ed titled *The Shadow Pandemic: Violence against Women during COVID-19* was published by the UN in Nigeria to highlight the situation at the time.

The women's movement also took the lead in protesting against this shadow pandemic of violence against women and influenced the 36 state governments to declare a state of emergency.

In addition, UN Women supported the African Women Leader Network Nigeria Chapter to host a hybrid physical and online intergenerational dialogue titled SGBV and Youth-Led Change Management. The event brought together older and younger women from government, CSOs, women's groups and the media in discussions that focused on assessing policy, legal and programmatic commitments and accountability towards ending violence against women and girls in Nigeria, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

# WOMEN, PEACE, SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION

The programme intervention area of Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action focused on enhancing women's capacities to influence conflict prevention and resolution, as well as peacebuilding recovery efforts and humanitarian action. Interventions focused on increasing women's effective participation in peace and security processes; working towards gender-sensitive security sector institutions for gender-responsive operations; improving public perceptions of the role of women in peace and security; responding to the humanitarian crisis in the North East by addressing the prevention and protection needs of conflict-affected women and girls; and enhancing conflict-affected women's access to justice.

## Key Achievements

In 2020, State Action Plans (SAPs) for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 were developed and adopted in Bauchi and Benue States. The two SAPs emerged as a result of capacity initiatives implemented by UN Women for key stakeholders from CSOs, security agencies, state legislatures, the judiciary, ministries, departments and agencies.

Community structures were also created to actively engage in the advancement of the WPS agenda. These structures include women peace mentors, women mediation networks, WPS media networks, SAP Implementation Committees and HeForShe networks.

Strategic action points consisting of increased advocacy, an assessment of women-led organizations working on UNSCR1325, resource mobilization and capacity strengthening were developed to advance UNSCR 1325 in Borno State following a workshop organized by UN Women in collaboration with the Borno State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. The two-day workshop was held in Maiduguri, Borno State, to reflect on the implementation of the Borno



*Stakeholders engaged in the SAP drafting workshop in Bauchi State.*

State Action Plan on UNSCR 1325, with learning and sharing from Yobe and Plateau States. The workshop was attended by 28 participants drawn from women-led organizations, women's rights groups and the Ministries of Women Affairs in Borno and Yobe States.

**Community awareness on WPS and UNSCR was increased through different channels.** A total of 104 episodes of a bi-weekly WPS interactive radio programme were aired on Globe FM and Radio Benue in Bauchi and Benue States for a wider reach among communities. A website on WPS ([www.wpsnigeria.net](http://www.wpsnigeria.net)) was also officially launched to serve as a collective repository and community of practice on the WPS agenda. Additionally, the twentieth anniversary of UNSCR 1325 was commemorated in Nigeria with a series of strategic activities conducted at both national and state levels. The Government of Nigeria reiterated its commitment to the provisions of UNSCR 1325, including plans to review Nigeria's second National Action Plan on the resolution and develop the third NAP with the integration of emerging peace and security issues in the country, including pandemics and climate security, from a gender perspective.

**UNSCR 1325 implementation capacities were strengthened in different states.** By the end of 2020, 70 personnel from security agencies (Nigeria Police Force and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps), 65 male leaders drawn from different sectors (HeForShe champions), and 200 women mediators from Bauchi and Benue States had been equipped with adequate skills to ensure a holistic approach to NAP localization in the two states. An additional 92 security personnel responding to the farmer–herder conflict in Benue, Taraba and Nasarawa States, mostly deployed as a part of the joint Operation



*Cross-section of stakeholders at the SAP drafting workshop in Benue State, facilitated by UN Women and partners.*

Whirl Stroke, enhanced their knowledge on the frameworks and strategies to prevent and respond to SGBV and sexual exploitation and abuse in their operational area.

Lawmakers in the Bauchi and Benue State Houses of Assembly passed the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Bill into law, endorsed the Bauchi and Benue SAPs, and committed to approving budgets for their implementation. The law was passed following WPS capacity-building interventions for 60 legislators in the Bauchi and Benue State Houses of Assembly, informed by a related institutional and capacity needs assessment conducted in the



*Cross-section of participants at the First Annual Forum of Women in the Security Sector, 18–19 November 2020, Abuja.*

two states. In addition, a guide titled *The Nigerian Legislature's Role in Advancing Women, Peace and Security* was developed, published and officially launched.

***Women's capacities and roles in formal peacebuilding, dialogue and mediation were strengthened.***

A total of 200 women (100 per state) selected at state and grass-roots levels improved their conflict prevention, peace negotiation and mediation skills. The women are now actively engaged in peacebuilding processes, in collaboration with various state and non-state actors in Bauchi and Benue. In addition, 90 women from cooperatives in Gashua and 60 in Mafa and Jere in the North East of Nigeria are mobilizing community women to demand women's rights from the government and community leaders and address VAWG. The women are also resolving community conflicts affecting women.

- Networks of Women in Peacebuilding, bringing together women from government and non-governmental organizations at state and community levels, were established in Benue, Nasarawa, and Taraba States for collaboration in preventing conflict and building peace. These networks are regularly using the skills acquired through UN Women's programmes to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflict. In Taraba State, the Ministry of Women Affairs (the coordinating body of the state's network) pushed for the approval of a budget line on women, peace and security.



*Benue and Bauchi State Legislators at a WPS capacity-building training.*

- Through intensive technical sessions, 35 women leaders from Benue, Nasarawa and Taraba States built their Track I and II Dialogue and Mediation skills. A protocol on gender-sensitive dialogue and mediation was developed as a tool to guide the mainstreaming of women's participation in formal mediation processes in the states. The protocol was disseminated as a working document of the proposed peacebuilding agency/commission.
- Platforms for empowering women's participation in peacebuilding processes were established in Nasarawa, Benue and Taraba States. Further, the Networks of Women in Peacebuilding in Nasarawa and Taraba States are working closely with the State Ministries of

Women Affairs in operationalizing UNSCR 1325 and developing State Action Plans. A network's technical working session with representatives of government ministries, departments and agencies influenced the integration of the women, peace and security agenda into the one-year action plans and the ministry/department/agency work plans for 2021/2022.

*Capacities of humanitarian organizations and staff were enhanced for mainstreaming gender in humanitarian response.* An estimated 120 humanitarian staff from UN agencies, international non-governmental organizations, national actors and government institutions enhanced their capacity in gender in humanitarian action and the humanitarian project cycle through trainings conducted by UN Women. This contributed to the improved use of sex- and age-disaggregated data in the Humanitarian Response Plan and Humanitarian Needs Overview. UN Women also capacitated the staff of humanitarian organizations on the application of the Gender with Age Marker to project modules. As a result, 46 per cent of proposals submitted demonstrated the availability of gender analysis.

In the North East region, a gender audit report of two humanitarian sectors (Protection and Livelihoods) was conducted to understand the differential access to and control of humanitarian and development assistance among women, men, boys and girls. Findings from the gender audit report



*Above: Capacity-building training for women mediators at the state level in Bauchi State.*

*Left: Capacity-building training for women mediators at the grass-roots level in Bauchi State.*

are currently guiding the two sectors in developing strategies for addressing gender gaps and needs in humanitarian and recovery actions.

Moreover, UN Women collaborated with CARE International and Oxfam to conduct a rapid gender analysis in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States, which are most affected by conflict, in order to understand the gender impact of COVID-19. The report from the assessment was used as a reference tool to help humanitarian partners develop and implement gender-responsive COVID-19 programmes.

*Interventions for preventing violent extremism were implemented in communities in the North East of Nigeria and led to the following results:*

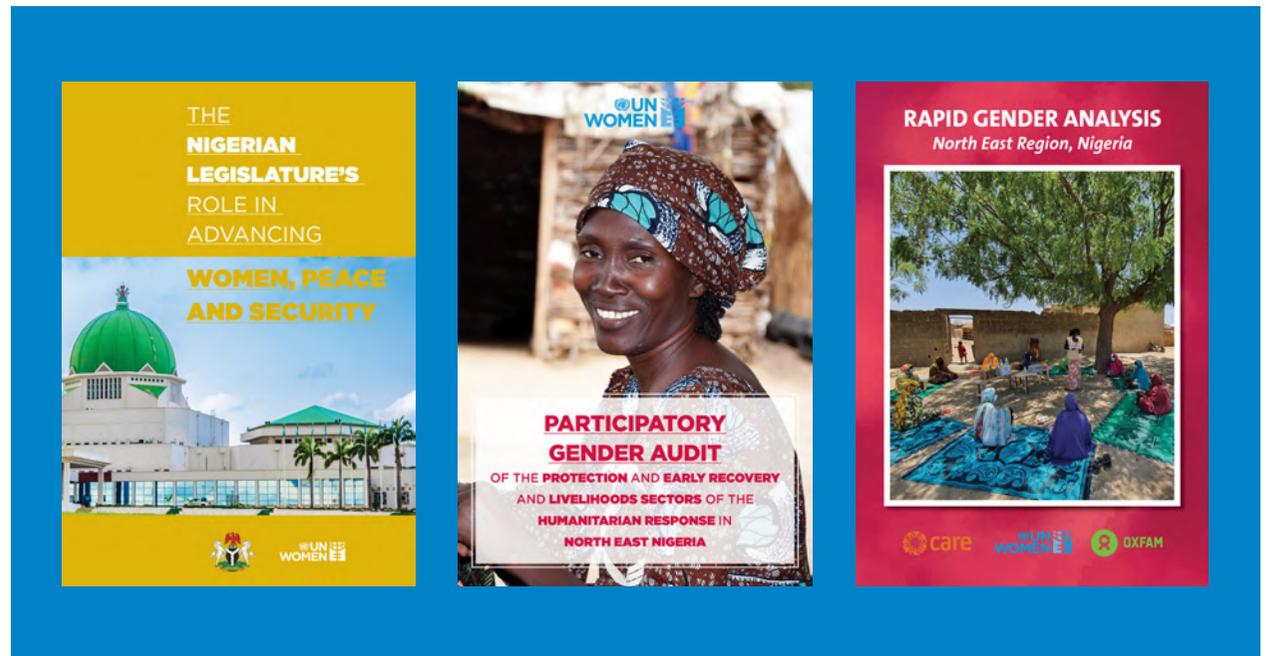
- An integrated Women's Empowerment Hub was established in Maiduguri, Borno State, to serve as a safe space for social cohesion and for improving knowledge on gender equality, women's rights, prevention of GBV, and promotion of reconciliation, resilience and de-radicalization for conflict-affected women. Through this hub, women regularly meet to interact, share

their concerns, and find psychosocial and legal support.

- Women’s civil society groups were capacitated to engage in strategies to prevent extreme violence and promote social cohesion. The trained women formed three Women Peacebuilder Network platforms in Borno and Yobe States. The networks are currently leading community initiatives to address issues of radicalization, early warning and prevention of violent extremism. The networks, in collaboration with other UN Women–supported community structures such as Community Security Architecture Observatories, have conducted awareness sessions targeting 287 youths (132 males and 155 females) in Maiduguri, Borno State.
- Eighty women representatives of farmers, herders, women’s associations and trade groups in Benue and Nasarawa States were engaged in a participatory consultative process to identify the impact of the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law on their economic, social and political lives. Key advocacy messages on the impact and recommendations to mitigate farmer–herder conflict were developed.
- Sixteen organizations/groups from the Network of Women in Peacebuilding in Benue, Nasarawa and Taraba States, consisting of 89 women and girls, were trained to produce hydro-alcoholic gel as a contribution to the COVID-19 response and as an alternative source of income.



UN Women Country Representative Comfort Lamptey visiting the Women’s Empowerment Hub in Maiduguri to interact with beneficiaries.



## IMPACT STORY: Anne Ameh

Superintendent of Police Anne Ameh is the highest-ranking female police officer in Benue State and Head of the Benue State Gender Desk. She has been a key resource for the development of the Benue State Action Plan to ensure that the new policy reflects the realities on the ground for women and girls in Benue. Only 15.6 per cent of the officers in the police state command are women, while 84.4 per cent are men.\*

Ameh is supervisor of eight colleagues (four men and four women), who together are responsible for dealing with cases of gender-based violence in Benue State. She was vocal throughout the Benue SAP drafting process on the need to include Pillar 3 on Protection and Prosecution: “I think, to a very large extent, the action plan is going to ease and enhance my work as a police officer. Because, as a gender officer, there are so many cases of abuse, and once women are well protected, the abuse will be reduced. For those who continue to abuse and disrespect women irrespective of the laws on the ground, prosecution will become very important. So, we will use the laws to prosecute the offenders. I know that with this action plan, in addition to the protection and prosecution, will also talk about women’s representation. So once a woman is represented and participates in peacebuilding that concerns her, she will know her rights to a large extent, her voice is going to be heard, and she will know that abuse towards her rights will be minimal or reduced. So, with that, I’m very happy to participate in developing the action plan for Benue State.”

The same process of SAP development was undertaken in Bauchi State, with over a decade of attacks by Boko Haram insurgents, leading to the development of an SAP that was validated by stakeholders who included the Bauchi State Governor, the 30 legislators in the State House of Assembly, ministries/departments/agencies, security agencies, traditional/religious leaders, CSOs, women’s groups/networks and the media.

\*UN Women Nigeria, *Women, Peace and Security in Bauchi and Benue States: Baseline Survey 2019*.



# NORMATIVE WORK ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The normative work of UN Women Nigeria focuses on supporting the formulation or review, passage, domestication and implementation of gender-responsive laws/policies; supporting the domestication and implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment commitments on various international conventions and declarations; ensuring stakeholder engagement in intergovernmental processes; and supporting high-level advocacy initiatives for commemorative key events.

## **Key Achievements**

In commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, UN Women, in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, CSOs, women's groups and young people, and with the participation of the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed, launched the Generation Equality campaign in Nigeria.

As part of the launch, advocacy audio and video messages were produced on the 12 themes of the Beijing Declaration and then disseminated. This included mobilizing several young women to speak up and demand the achievement of the commitments for women and girls.

In line with the objectives of the Generation Equality campaign, UN Women successfully implemented a six-month structured mentorship programme for 25 young women, who received mentorship from 25 women activists who were at the Beijing Conference 25 years ago. This was done through one-on-one sessions comprising a webinar series, and through on-site project development by the mentees.

The 25 young women acquired mentorship on women's rights, human rights, feminism, gender mainstreaming, project management and other life skills to enable them to continue the legacy of



*Honourable Minister Dame Pauline K. Tallen, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs.*

promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Nigeria. They also developed five fundable proposals and related budgets as a result of the skills and knowledge gained.

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign was effectively implemented in Nigeria. UN Women successfully coordinated and led the campaign planning and implementation processes within and beyond the UN.

At the UN level, UN Women ensured joint messaging during the campaign, aligned with the Fund, Respond, Collect and Protect theme, through the leadership and drafting of a Gender Theme Group joint op-ed, signed by the Resident Coordinator, which was published in four of the largest newspapers in Nigeria, online and in print.

As a secretariat of the Development Partners Group on Gender, UN Women convened meetings for members to discuss and plan for the campaign, share and document commemorative activities for the period, and agree on how to support activities led by the Ministry of Women Affairs.

The national flag-off and press briefing for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence 2020 therefore culminated in high-level events attended by the Minister of Women Affairs (lead), the UN Resident Coordinator, the UN Women and UNFPA Country Representatives, the European



*Generation Equality launch and events.*



Union delegation, the heads of several embassies, international development organizations, CSOs and women groups, and the media.

Other campaign events in Nigeria included community and school outreach, media engagements, town hall meetings, launches of sexual response centres, and webinars to demand more accountability for GBV. Calls and demands were also made for more flexible funds to advocate for GBV prevention.



*Closing ceremony of the 2020 Beijing+25 Inter-generational Mentoring Programme.*

## IMPACT STORY

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

*Girl Guiding has moved from the confinement of educational institutions towards the community, especially during the COVID-19 response*

From her early primary school days, Asmau was a brilliant girl, performing well both academically and socially. She had a strong passion for community work, which led her to join the Nigerian Girl Guides Association, 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 not only to give back to her school through various activities, but also to mentor other younger upcoming guides: brownies (aged 5–10), guides (aged 11–14), rangers (aged 15–18) and young leaders (aged 18+).

Now a graduate of computer science, Asmau says, “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. It 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 to conduct non-formal education activities, including workshops, camps, leadership training and door-to-door sensitization. According to Asmau, when the 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 and social distancing. They were also able to distribute relief items, including sanitary materials for 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 women at the grass-roots 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,” says Asmau.

Asmau Aliyu is currently National Youth Commissioner of the Nigerian Girl Guides Association. She works closely with the UN Women Risk Communication and Community Engagement 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.



# GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT COORDINATION

UN Women Nigeria plays a pivotal role in the coordination of gender equality and women's empowerment activities at the country level. The coordination role of UN Women manifests under three main categories: regular strategic policy-level dialogue that convenes development partners working on gender equality (Development Partners Group on Gender); a Gender Theme Group made up of actors within the UN system; and a Civil Society Advisory Group.

## Key Achievements

UN Women's technical lead role was fulfilled through developing and coordinating the Gender Theme Group (GTG), and achieved the following:

- Through intensive GTG coordination meetings during the COVID-19 lockdown, gender was mainstreamed into the UN response to COVID-19, and information sharing on UN response measures was easily coordinated. The UN GTG authored two advocacy briefs, one to guide the COVID-19 response on gender and one to address the increase in SGBV (exemplified by the Governors' Declaration of Emergency on SGBV in June 2020).
- The implementation of the Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System in Nigeria started and was strengthened by UN Women through facilitating technical support from the Gender Parity Unit at UN Women headquarters, the GTG, Gender Focal Points and the Resident Coordinator's Office. The guidelines were presented to all UN Nigeria staff in a town hall meeting on 21 July 2020. Further to the meeting, a strategy for Nigeria and heads of agencies to report on gender parity data was developed. Gender parity data from all UN Country Teams was collected and a second staff survey on gender work culture was launched.
- The UN Gender Scorecard was developed under the coordination of the GTG, and its implementation began. The scorecard will ensure the accountability of senior managers and the improvement of UN Country Team performance towards achieving gender equality.
- The GTG Annual Retreat was convened by UN Women and paved the way for the improvement of the 2021 GTG Annual Work Plan. The retreat provided an opportunity for training on best practices from GTGs in the region, as well as a presentation from the UN Coordination Division on the new Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review and a presentation of the Women Count programme on data research in Nigeria.
- UN Women also led the process to nominate GTG members for all sector groups to ensure gender-sensitive Common Country Assessment and Country Framework analyses.
- A concept note on a gender impact assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic was developed and submitted to the One-UN COVID-19 Basket Fund for review and funding. Subsequently, the basket fund has mobilized funding of US\$ 1.39 million from the European Union to address the socio-economic and communication challenges associated with COVID-19.

UN Women contributed to the procurement of items by the UN system in Nigeria towards the supply of vital health items to support the Government of Nigeria's COVID-19 Response Plan and UNICEF's work with children and families in Nigeria. The supplies, received on 16 April 2020, included 10,000 test kits, 15 oxygen concentrators, personal protective equipment, vaccines, interagency emergency health kits, post-exposure preventative kits, and other vital health items.



*A UNICEF official receives at the airport the shipment of vital health supplies procured through contributions from UN Women and other partners.*



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To eliminate violence  
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Initiated by the European Union and the United Nations:



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