



Promoting Women's Engagement in Peace and Security in Northern Nigeria

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Dear Partners,

We are delighted to present Issue 2 of the 'Promoting Women's Engagement in Peace and Security in Northern Nigeria' Programme newsletter. The Programme is funded by the European Union and supports the federal and state ministries of Women Affairs and Social Development in three states in northern Nigeria (Adamawa, Plateau and Gombe), and selected constituted local government areas (LGAs) with the objectives of strengthening women's leadership, advancing gender equality and improving protection for women and children in conflict settings.

This issue highlights key activities undertaken by the Women Peace and Security (WPS) Programme from October to December and showcases some of the results attained during this period.

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UN WOMEN LAUNCHES BASELINE SURVEY REPORT IN ABUJA



UN Women and partners at the launch of the Baseline Survey Report. Photo: UN Women.

On 13 October, the report on the baseline survey for the European Union (EU)-funded programme '*Promoting Women's Engagement in Peace and Security in Northern Nigeria*' was launched at the Rockview Hotel in Abuja. About 90 partners and stakeholders drawn locally and nationally were in attendance, including representatives of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the EU, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), the federal and state ministries of Women Affairs and Social Development (MWASD), the Ministry of Budget and National Planning (MBNP), traditional and community leaders, civil society organisations, security agencies and the media.

The baseline survey, conducted in Adamawa, Gombe and Plateau States in 2015 and 2016, analyses the nature and extent of women's participation in peace building and conflict management processes in the three target states; the level of access for girls and women affected by violence to reporting mechanisms and protection services; as well as the formal and informal mechanisms in place or required for the effective implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the target states.

In her welcome address, the UN Women Programme Manager for the Women, Peace and Security, Njeri Karuru, highlighted the objectives of the survey and some of the findings: "We sought to understand at what level women are engaged in peace and security structures in target states of northern Nigeria.

The Baseline Survey Report is very revealing, and it shows that women are hardly engaged in peace-building. As we launch this publication, we hope to provide relevant information for strategic policy and programmatic interventions on peace and security by stakeholders, at all levels. We also look towards strengthening partnerships with stakeholders working in the area of peace and security in Nigeria,” she said.



Cross section of stakeholders at the launch of the Baseline Survey Report. Photo: UN Women.

Professor Oluwafunmilayo Para-Mallam, of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), and the lead researcher of the report, presented a summary of the baseline survey. She stated that the report revealed that

women are marginalised from the hierarchy of decision-making structures, but are active in intra-family peace building and conflict management. She further explained that “cultural and religious factors limit women from being engaged in formal peace negotiations. At state level, women have low decision-making powers, particularly in elective posts, which at the time of the study were Gombe (0%), Adamawa (6.3%) and Plateau (9.2%).”

The presentation of the study findings was followed by an interactive session which enabled stakeholders to share good practices, success stories, lessons learnt, and challenges. There was emphasis on the need for security agencies, especially the police, to strengthen its mechanism in addressing cases of gender-based violence.

Copies of the report were distributed to all participants at the event. The report is expected to serve as a resource for peacebuilding initiatives, including policy and programming interventions by UN Women and other actors.

BREAKING TRADITIONAL BARRIERS AND INSTALLING FEMALE WARD HEADS IN ADAMAWA STATE



The Wakili Bachama with the newly inaugurated Female Chiefs in Numan LGA, Adamawa State. Photo: UN Women

Nigeria is a patriarchal society where culture and tradition unfavourably place women in subordination to men. Numan local government area (LGA) of Adamawa State is no exception to this. However, during repeated advocacy visits and strategic meetings by UN Women and its women peace mentors to the King, His Royal Highness, Honestus I. Stephen, the Hama Bachama, on the need to involve more women in peace and security processes, the King admitted that “if we had involved more women in peace and security, we would not have had this rate of attacks. Because we did not make good use of our women, the insurgents saw a better way of using them to attack us. I thank UN Women because the Women, Peace and Security Programme is coming at the right time”.

Having observed the key role women peace mentors were playing in the promotion of peaceful coexistence, thereby reducing tension,

building bridges of relationships across ethnic, and religious boundaries in Numan Kingdom, the King was impressed and as a result, took an action for greater involvement of women in decision-making by appointing 49 women as assistant advisers in the traditional council.

Additionally, the King authorised the selection and installation of four women as assistants to four village heads – against the norm in his realm, where only men occupied the position of ward heads. The women appointed are: Tinim Minfas – Kwalinga Ward; Josephine Philips – Gweda Ward; Tina Bedam – Mgbawwono Ward; and Hajia Dijatu Yahasa Usman - Sabon Pegi Ward.

When asked why the paramount ruler decided to involve more women in decision making, the Wakili of the traditional council, Chief Philemon Godi said that, “Men alone cannot do the job, and that is why I selected these four women as

assistants to the ward or village heads. Also, women have access to more information which can be useful to the whole community.

“If you want to have peace at home, places of work and community, you have to involve

women. There are currently about 7,000 internally displaced persons residing in Numan and we know that women have suffered. We have done this so that women can talk to children and the youth to have a peaceful community”.

TRADITIONAL RULER APPOINTS WOMEN AS MEMBERS OF TRADITIONAL COUNCIL IN PLATEAU STATE



Hajiya Saadatu Yakubu Adamu and Mrs Ruth Abuku Bukar, women peace mentors and appointees into the traditional council of Gindiri, Plateau State. Photo: UN Women.

The Rit of Gindiri, Alhaji Adamu Tanko, a traditional ruler in Mangu LGA, Plateau State, in November appointed two women as members of his traditional council. This is one of the efforts made at involving women strategically in peace and security structures in Plateau.

Alhaji Tanko is one of the community leaders engaged in the Northern Nigeria Women, Peace and Security Programme. After attending several Programme and review meetings organised by UN Women and partners, where good practices were shared, the Rit of Gindiri decided to replicate the same activities in his community. One of the highlighted success stories during the experience sharing sessions is that of Kaltungo Kingdom where the Emir of Kaltungo appointed over 40 women as his advisers. The Rit of Gindiri appointed Ruth

Abuku Bukar and Hajiya Saadatu Yakubu Adamu as members of the traditional council of Gindiri, where issues of peace, security and other matters affecting the community are discussed.

Mrs Ruth Abuku Bakar, one of the women included in the traditional council said, “With the two of us on the Gindiri Traditional Council, the community’s perception that women are weak and should not be in decision-making positions is changing.”

She also added that, “It has helped to build our self-confidence. The first few meetings were terrible for us as we were very afraid to speak but we have gradually gained the confidence to speak.”

Through advocacy and continuous engagement, more traditional rulers and community leaders

are embracing the inclusion of women in peace and security, as well as in decision-making in Plateau State.

UN Women and partners are intensifying efforts to replicate this positive development in other parts of the LGA and the state at large.



HRH the Rit of Gindiri, Mangu LGA. Alh Adamu Tanko. Photo: UN Women.

COMMUNITY LEADERS IN GOMBE STATE COMMIT TO ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



Community leaders and other stakeholders at the town hall meeting in Kaltungo LGA, Gombe State. Photo: UN Women

UN Women organised a town hall meeting to mark the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence on 29 November at Kaltungo LGA in Gombe State. This was an initiative under the 'Promoting Women's Engagement in Peace and Security in Northern Nigeria' Programme. The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign is a period set aside to stimulate action to end violence against women and girls around the world.

The town hall meeting focused on the values and positive outcomes of preventing all forms of violence against women and children, for the attainment of sustainable peace and development. About 70 stakeholders were in

attendance at the meeting, including security agencies, traditional and religious leaders, teachers, women mentors, local government officials and ward councillors.

The District Head of Bozun-Shilwa, Umar Gurama, presented a paper on violence against women, and called on the federal and state governments to enact laws that suit the culture and religion of the people, so that women can exercise their rights in the society and can live free of violence.

UN Women's Gender Technical Advisor, Rhoda Zira Dia, called on community and religious leaders to involve women in the peace process

and decision making. “We expect women to be part of committees in your communities when decisions are taken concerning issues of peace. If, for example, a traditional leader invites men to handle issues, we want women to be amongst those resolving conflicts. Women also have ideas. They have a voice, and they have something to contribute to the table when it comes to the issue of conflict resolution and decision making,” said Mrs. Zira.

Closing her speech, Mrs. Zira thanked for the support of leaders at all levels to involve women in decision making. Community leaders in Kaltungo LGA agreed to support and put an end to violence against women and girls by signing a commitment form at the end of the town hall meeting.



UN Women Gender Technical Advisor, Ms Rhoda Zira addressing the community leaders. Photo: UN Women.

Similar town hall meetings aimed at ending gender-based violence were conducted in other target LGAs of Gombe State.

UN WOMEN CONDUCTS CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON GENDER SENSITIVE REPORTING FOR FEMALE JOURNALISTS IN PLATEAU AND ADAMAWA STATES



Cross-section of participants at the Capacity Building Workshop for female journalists in Adamawa State. Photo: UN Women

UN Women, in collaboration with the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), organised a four-day capacity building workshop on gender-sensitive reporting for female journalists in Northern Nigeria. This took place on 8-9 November at HBC Resort, Plateau State, and on 15-16 November at Homtel Hotel, Adamawa State. About 120 participants and stakeholders of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Programme attended the workshops, including members of NAWOJ, representatives of the federal and state ministries of Women Affairs and Social Development (MWASD), the Ministry of Budget and National Planning (MBNP), and media outlets.

The workshops were aimed at enhancing the capacity of female journalists on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, gender-sensitive reporting, safety during reporting, and other gender-related issues. The participants comprised of both print and electronic media journalists from Abuja, Plateau, Bauchi, Gombe, Adamawa, Yobe and Borno states.

At the capacity building workshop, the WPS Deputy Programme Manager Peter Mancha presented an overview of the Northern Nigeria Women, Peace and Security Programme. He highlighted the objectives of the Programme, which are to strengthen women's role in conflict prevention, peace-making and peace building; mitigate the impact of conflict upon

women and girls (including gender-based violence); and enhance a conducive environment for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and monitoring of gender equality commitments in Nigeria.

The National President of NAWOJ, Ifeyinwa Omowole, while giving her goodwill message highlighted that women are the key actors in peace building. She said "women are the most affected when there is conflict, and that is why there is ongoing advocacy for government to involve women in peace and security structures." Ms. Omowole encouraged the female journalists to take lessons learnt from the workshops and replicate in their work. She also charged the journalists to change their style of reportage to include the use of gender lens.

The Director of Planning and Research, Retshik Tireng, who represented the Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development in Plateau State, in his goodwill message, highlighted the fact that information is power and it can impact public discourse.

At the workshop in Adamawa State, the Permanent Secretary for the state MWASD, Hajia Maisaratu Bello, presented a goodwill message on behalf of the Commissioner. She said that the people of Adamawa are relying on the journalists that benefited from the training to carry out gender-sensitive reporting in a way that highlights the specific needs of women and girls affected by the insurgency and other forms of conflicts, while also contributing to the development of the state.

During the training sessions, Peter Mancha also presented on the topic 'Understanding the Concept of Gender.' He described gender as a key to achieving sustainable development. Mr. Mancha talked about the concept of 'glass ceiling', which refers to women restricted from rising above a certain level, particularly in places of work. He emphasised the importance of organisations integrating gender policies to

eliminate glass ceilings for women. He rounded up his session with the words: "Human development, if not *engendered*, is *endangered*."



Participants during a group work session. Photo: UN Women.

Other sessions during the workshop included video presentations on gender concepts by one of the workshop facilitators, Jide Atta. A session on 'Peace Journalism and Gender Sensitive Reporting' was moderated by a co-facilitator, Dr Edward Akpomera. He emphasised the need for every journalist to do research and go beyond the press release to find out what is really happening, point out alternatives to solve the issue, and help to contribute to the management of conflicts. Egbe Okpewuru, Assistant Director, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, also made a presentation on "Understanding the UNSCR 1325 and the National Action Plan", explaining various ways in which women in media can help to advance the resolution.

The workshop moreover featured technical sessions where participants were placed in groups to identify gender issues, sex issues and gender stereotypes in their community, and also to share various perspectives and experiences. Afterwards, participants were presented with certificates of participation, and formally welcomed to the UN Women Media Network.

NATIONAL LEVEL STAKEHOLDERS VALIDATE FINDINGS FROM REVIEW OF STATES' PEACE ARCHITECTURE



Cross-section of participants at the validation meeting. Photo: UN Women.

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Programme engaged consultants to review the peace and security architecture of Adamawa, Gombe and Plateau (the target states).



Cross section of participants at the Stakeholders' Validation Workshop in Gombe State. Photo: UN Women.

Following the completion of the field work and analysis of data and information gathered by the research team, stakeholders' validations workshops were held on 5, 6, and 8 December in Adamawa, Gombe and Plateau, respectively.

A summary of key findings, recommendations, and policy and programmatic actions was presented by the research team lead, Dr. Abdul Hussain. An average of about fifty stakeholders participated in each of the validation meetings. Participants provided additional information and recommendations to the research team and UN Women, which will add value to the survey finding and programmatic interventions.

Subsequently, a national validation meeting was conducted in Abuja on 13 December, 2016 at Rockview Hotel, with about 30 participants and stakeholders in attendance. These included representatives from the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, European Union, UN Women, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, National Open University, Media Network, research institutes, CSOs and development partners.

The UN Women WPS Programme Manager, Njeri Karuru noted that the Northern Nigeria

Women, Peace and Security Programme has so far focused on changing attitudes towards women's engagement in peace and security structures. She said, "We have made some progress in the three states in sensitising the various institutions and communities. The recent appointment of women in some of the traditional institutions in Adamawa is just one example of how the advocacy and sensitisation is yielding results. Similar appointments have been made in Plateau and Gombe."

The UN Women Acting Country Representative, Adjaratou F. Ndiaye, in her welcome address emphasised that the validation meeting was a technical but very important process, and that the peace architecture was critical to the objectives of the Programme. She also mentioned that some of the expectations were that the study should highlight the peace structures in the state and the different challenges faced by women actors.

The European Union Programme Manager, Laolu Olawumi, expressed her appreciation to UN Women for the organisation of the programme. She emphasised that it is important that women are part of the peace structure and processes. She mentioned that women and girls face greater difficulties in accessing their rights. She thus applauded that the programme advocates for improved engagement of women in peace structures.

The lead author of the research team, Dr. Abdu Hussaini made a presentation on the key findings from the survey conducted in the three states. Some critical issues identified include significant loss of state monopoly of legitimate means of violence; growing loss of legitimacy of state institutions; globalisation of conflict; and the complexity of Nigeria's political structure.

During the presentation on key findings, some of the highlights were:

- Negotiation and mediation are the major means of peace building; women, however, think military action is often key to peace building.
- Traditional and religious institutions and leaders are the most important peace blocks.
- While men are generally inclined to less formal institutions as first point of call during conflict, women are more inclined to formal institutions.
- Women are highly involved in peace building at the community level but less at strategic levels.
- Radio is still considered the most important means of accessing peace and security information, while social media—despite the notable challenges of access, hate messages and fake news—also remains an important instrument for peace building.
- Social media can help to democratise access to information and promote inclusion in peace building process, however, more women than men think it is ineffective, a possible result of the technological exclusion of women.

Recommendations made for programming include:

- Build a critical mass of women peace building leaders.
- Institute a gender-transformative political, economic and security environment.
- Advocate for gender-transformative communication, consultation and negotiation systems which include training for journalists on conflict and peace reporting.
- Lobby for national and inter-state cooperation and engagement.

The validation meeting featured several comments and observations from the participants. Nneka Egbuna, WPS Programme Assistant at UN Women, commented that the

Nigerian constitution does not have specific roles for traditional rulers, and it would be helpful if their roles in peace building could be recognised. Other comments stressed the need for academia and private institutions to be more engaged in peace building initiatives.

At the end of the validation exercise, UN Women WPS Deputy Programme Manager, Peter Mancha, reiterated the need to engage all

stakeholders in the states' peace architectures, ensuring synergy and effective coordination at all levels. He reiterated that findings from the survey revealed large gaps in women's participation in peace and security structures, and the need to take strategic policy and programmatic actions to effect change. Following the conclusion of the validation meetings, the report of the survey will be published, launched and widely disseminated.

PHOTO NEWS



Community leaders at the town hall meeting to mark the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender - Based Violence in Kaltungo Local Government Area, Gombe State. Photo: UN Women



Members of the UN Women Media Network and other stakeholders at the launch of the Baseline Survey Report in Abuja. Photo: UN Women.



Interactive Session at the Capacity Building Workshop on Gender-Sensitive Reporting for female journalists in Adamawa State. Photo: UN Women.



Group Work at the Capacity Building Workshop on Gender-Sensitive Reporting for female journalists in Plateau State. Photo: UN Women.

Editorial team:

Ms Njeri Karuru,
WPS Programme Manager,
UN Women

Mr Peter Mancha,
WPS Deputy Programme Manager,
UN Women

Oluwatosin Akingbulu,
Communications Consultant,
UN Women