

# Helpline Foundation for the Needy Abuja

National Parallel Reports on the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a Parallel Report on the performance of Nigeria's implementation of the Beijing declaration on the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) compiled by the Helpline Foundation for the Needy, a non-governmental organization that has devoted the past seventeen years of its existence towards improving the lives of vulnerable people, especially women and girls in Nigeria.

The effort to compile this report is born out of the understanding that governments must collaborate with relevant stakeholders towards the implementation of its aims and set goals.

It's an analysis of progress made so far in Nigeria over the last five years by governments and partner organizations

**On the most important achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past five years in Nigeria**

*This is in line with the critical areas of concern of the Beijing platform for action, Articles 11, 7, 10, 3, 4 and 2 of the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and also, Goal 5 on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment of the SDGs which cuts across all SDGs.*

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) is the resulting document of the 4th World Conference on Women which took place in Beijing, China in 1995. The document

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was adopted unanimously by the United Nations and marked a global defining moment in the trajectory of gender equality and women's empowerment. Over twenty years after it was conceptualized and subsequently adopted, the BPFA has continued to provide a comprehensive policy and programmatic guide for achieving the goals of gender equality and women empowerment in Nigeria.

In the past five years the technical capacity of institutions (government and non-governmental) to respond to the problems of discrimination and violence against women in Nigeria have been strengthened by various policy instruments of the government; Policy makers, influencers and actors are more aware of the challenges and prospects for change in the push to attaining gender equality in Nigeria. More women as well as men are improving their capacity to bridge the gender gap by learning technical skills in gender advocacy thereby improving their competence in women's rights and gender issues; these new breed of gender advocates who are found in significant numbers within the academia, public and private sectors including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have helped transformed the issues beyond a debate to ensuring various legislative arms domesticate the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Nigeria's major achievements in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women since the adoption of the BPFA include:

- Integration of gender and social inclusion targets in economic policies, budgets and development frameworks;

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- Initiatives to partner with men and boys in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- Institutional arrangements on gender entrenched in public administration systems and processes Increased participation of women in public and political life;

Nigeria's committee on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in collaboration with other civil society organizations presented a report highlighting the implementation of the CEDAW in Nigeria in July 2017 as required by Article 18 of the CEDAW. This report focused on women, peace and security issues and identified the gaps that needed the urgent attention of the legislature. The thematic areas of focus as identified in the 2017 Nigeria CEDAW report are:

- Conflict prevention
- Discrimination and gender based violence
- Women's space in political and public life
- Situation of rural women
- Education of women and girls

Significant progress is being made towards the respect of women's rights in Nigeria; Research and training in human rights and gender, which were largely provided informally by CSOs are increasingly being institutionalized within the formal education system and this has enhanced opportunities for capacity strengthening in these fields, unlike the situation at the end of the 1980s when the

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only known Women's Research Centre was the University of Ibadan based Women's Research and Documentation Centre, (WORDOC), a number of Nigerian universities now boast of Gender Centers and Gender Programmes. Examples include the Centre for Gender and Social Policy of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife, Centre for Gender, Benue State University Makurdi, Gender Centre of the University of Ado Ekiti, Center for Gender Studies, Nasarawa State University and the Centre for Gender Studies of the University of Abuja.

Gender Mainstreaming is gradually becoming an indispensable policy in public institutions in Nigeria, a huge percentage of Ministries, departments and parastatals have designated Gender Desks with officers whose core duty is to ensure that the organization's policies is in conformity with the gender equality agenda. The Gender desks however need to be granted autonomy to act independently of the organization's administrative hierarchy. All gender desks should be amalgamated under one agency; the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as inaugurated by Nigeria's federal government can be institutionalized and made to oversee the work of gender desk offices.

There has also been an increase in inter-agency collaborations and cooperation between government at the three levels (federal, state and local) and civil society organizations towards implementation of agreed resolutions on issues including gender violence, early and forced marriages, girl-child education as well as political and economic rights of women. Governments have exhibited commendable levels of openness to civil society cooperation and collaboration in the numerous

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campaigns that have been jointly pursued around women's reproductive health and access to education. Government as well as civil society organizations (CSOs) also cooperate and collaborate extensively with international development partners. Various network platforms and movements have been established to facilitate cooperation and network, for instance the Gender Technical Unit and Women in Peace Network.

The HE for SHE Programme on Gender Equality initiated by the federal government in May 2017 aimed at breaking cultural barriers to gender equality. The programme identifies male Ambassadors to champion the course of gender equality, while improving awareness on the programme.

Significant progress has also been made in reducing maternal mortality rate, the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) provides free antenatal care in all peripheral hospitals in FCT and this has afforded women in rural areas in the FCT have access to primary and secondary healthcare.

The Save a Million Lives Initiative launched by the Federal government in 2012 as a response to deplorable conditions of primary health centers across the country has drawn the much needed attention of stakeholders to the plight of women in accessing healthcare.

The advocacies and collaborations between governments and non-governmental actors have within the past five years led, to significant progress in policy formulation. The Violence Against Persons (VAP) Act 2015 which prohibits every form of violence against individuals in private and public life and provides

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maximum protection and remedies for victims and punishment of offenders is one of such commendable policy documents that when fully implemented will ensure that all persons are adequately safeguarded, it will however be remarkable to have legislations targeted specifically at protecting women from all violent acts. Some sections of the Nigerian Criminal Code attempts to provide protection for women against violence but it's not enough when compared to similar provisions a related to men: Section 353 of the Criminal Code states that:

*“Any person who unlawfully and indecently assaults a male person is guilty of felony and is liable to imprisonment for three years, the offender cannot be arrested without warrant”*

Section 360 however states that:

*“Any person who unlawfully and indecently assaults a woman or girl is guilty of misdemeanor and is liable to imprisonment”*

A comparative analysis of these two provisions reveals that there is a need to repeal some of Nigeria's laws which are discriminatory in nature. The question here is why will the same assault meted out on a man be tagged a felony with a higher punishment while same assault against a woman is merely classified as a misdemeanor with lesser punishment.

The Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development (MWASD) in 2016 launched the National Strategic Plan 2016-2021 to End Child Marriage in Nigeria. The plan highlights the multi-sectoral, multifaceted approach needed to successfully bring

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an end to the scourge of child marriages in Nigeria. Forty-three percent (43%) of girls in Nigeria are still married off before the age of eighteen (18), this is responsible for the steady decline in girl child enrollment in schools, Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF) disease and other depravities. Local community leaders and other institutions have to collaborate to create awareness on the matter. If fully implemented, the action plan can trigger a significant eighty-five percent (80%) decline in child marriages in Nigeria.

NGOs and CSOs also play a major role in bringing an end to the child marriage scourge in Nigeria and like on most of the issues, the NGOs must collaborate with community leaders and government institutions to fight the scourge. In 2015 a thirteen-year-old girl, Comfort, was rescued by Helpline Foundation for the Needy Abuja just as she was on the verge of being sold into marriage to a much older man by her own mother. Members of Comfort's community reached out to the NGO because they had previously run campaigns against child marriage in the community, these campaigns made the complainants aware of the dangers of sending girls into marriage at an early age. Comfort was rescued and taken to another community to continue her education, this rescue would however not have been possible if the NGO had not collaborated with community leaders to create awareness on the subject matter. Comfort is just one out of hundreds of thousands of girls who are incessantly being deprived of their right to education due to early child marriage.

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The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development also established a child protection sub-working group in 2016, the core responsibility of the group is to coordinate Child Welfare Services, especially in the North-Eastern region of Nigeria. In the course of two years, 2016-2018 the working group on child protection investigated a total of 92 cases of child abuse in (Internally Displaced Persons) IDP camps in the North East Nigeria. Victims often do not get appropriate post-trauma medical care and offenders are mostly never brought to justice.

The effort to strengthen the socio-economic stability of women in Nigeria as driven by the federal government has recently gained momentum through the trader money scheme where market women benefit from a direct cash transfer programme to fund their businesses and repay within three months. The government's home grown school feeding programme also empowers women in various communities by employing them as cooks and suppliers. These empowerment schemes are however not sustainable means towards economic self-reliant and should as such be reviewed by the government.

NGOs in Nigeria are at the heart of providing economic empowerment to women through various empowerment schemes, worthy of note is Helpline Foundation for the Needy Abuja's Non-profit Revolving Loan Scheme; an interest free community based micro lending initiative which has since 2016 benefited over seven hundred women in north central Nigeria and is now been replicated by other NGOs including some in South-East Nigeria. Another non-governmental collaboration that is worthy of note is the partnership between the Coca-Cola

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Company and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) coming together to strengthen educational opportunities for the girl-child in Nigeria; they launched the 'Educating Nigerian Girls in Nigerian Enterprise' (ENGINE) in march 2014. The initiative benefited about 6,000 girls in local communities in South- West Nigeria. The ENGINE project empowers the educationally and economically disadvantaged children in designated under-resourced communities through training modules in four important areas to help them succeed as entrepreneurs.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) has been catalytic in terms of strengthening the participation of women in governance, however the inclusion of women in governance and public service at all levels in Nigeria still leaves a lot desired. In Nigeria, women participation in politics is not proportionate to the 50% of the nation's population which they represent and has not translated into equal representation in political leadership positions. Federal states and local governments are not living up to their commitment of ensuring at least thirty-five percent of public offices are held by women. Political parties make the electoral process expensive and cumbersome thereby automatically reducing women's access to power. Women groups are at the fore front of advocating for inclusion in governance and political office holders have verbally committed to doing more but without any legislative instrument to enforce this commitment, inclusion remains a mirage in governance. The Gender Advocacy for Justice Initiative (GAJI) a Nigerian NGO successfully advocated for and facilitated the reservation of elective positions for women in Local Government Council elections in Benue

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State. This resulted in 30% of women occupying chair-person positions in the Benue State Local Government Councils.

The Kaduna state governor, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai deserves to be commended and his inclusive governance policy adopted by other state governors. He has not only exceeded the thirty-five percent inclusion of women in public offices, he also appointed a woman as his deputy thereby making her the second in northern Nigeria and currently the only female deputy governor in Northern Nigeria.

There has been an increased effort towards training and capacity building in the field of gender equality and women's advancement by security agencies with a high male labour force, for instance the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) and the National Immigration Service (NIS). *These agencies have benefited immensely from a range of training and sensitization on issues of violence against children and women. Within the NPF, training sessions have involved personnel of the highest level, including heads of the police force (AU Solemn Declaration Country Report, 2013).* Progress in this regard has been informed by multi-stakeholder collaboration between the national gender machinery, civil society and international partners working towards promoting gender in order to sustain the impact of these interventions, gender units have been established within most government ministries, departments and agencies. The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, working with UN Women has supported the development of an internal Gender Policy for the Nigerian Police Force in particular.

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## **ON THE CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE BPfA, CEDAW & THE SDGs AND THE VIOLATION OF RIGHTS ENCOUNTERED BY NIGERIAN WOMEN**

The major challenges to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in Nigeria since the adoption of the BPfA include:

- Socio cultural barriers
- Inadequate funding
- Insecurity, Gender Based violence (GBV) and conflict
- Non implementation of some of the gender specific laws and policies

### **Socio cultural barriers**

In spite of the fact that gender awareness is increasing, progress towards attaining gender equality is still hindered by deeply entrenched social constructs and cultural beliefs, which sometimes perpetuate gender bias and limit women's access and opportunities. These are particularly challenging because they lead to systemic, pervasive and deeply entrenched discrimination, which influence social institutions as well as the formal and informal rules that regulate kinship patterns, inheritance norms, legal Sharia, and also constitutional laws and policies. (Country Gender Report, 2012). As part of the process of addressing the above challenge, law reforms have deliberately targeted the passage of gender equality laws at national and state levels respectively. These are further discussed below. As a compliment to this, there is ongoing legislative advocacy by civil society to ensure that gender equality related bills are passed into law. The National Gender

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Machinery also periodically engages in high level advocacy and awareness raising amongst gatekeepers of custom in an attempt to renegotiate some of the more restrictive socio cultural limitations.

### **Inadequate Funding**

Lack of finance remains a major impediment to the implementation of interventions, which target the closure of gender gaps. Low budgetary allocations and short-term donor support have consistently limited the capacity of state and national gender machineries to meet up with their annual targets. This has limited the success rate for achieving agreed gender equality targets. In order to address this challenge, concerted efforts are being made by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to encourage private sector support for gender equality and the empowerment of women, Insecurity, Gender violence and conflicts.

*One in three of all women and girls aged 15-24 have been victims of violence. Women who have never been married are more likely to have been attacked than married women, (Country Gender Report, 2012).* Research has suggested disturbingly, that violence is endemic in some public institutions, including the police and some tertiary education institutions, where an “entrenched culture of impunity” protects perpetrators of rape and other violence. These crimes are under-reported and very few of the victims seek redress in the law courts.

Fear of violence is a major hindrance to Nigeria’s progress in the quest for gender equality. The fear of violent uprisings and attacks not only deters girls from going

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to school but impacts on almost every aspect of women's lives, as it reduces their capacity to be productive and active citizens. The upsurge of insurgency in parts of North-East Nigeria in the past decade has not only hindered the realization of national development targets generally, it has impaired already existing progress on gender equality in that region. Nigeria already experiences a situation where *human development outcomes for girls and women are worse in the North, where poverty levels are sometimes twice as high as parts of the South (72% in the North-East compared with 26% in the South-East and a national average of 54%). (Country Gender Report, 2012)* Nearly half of all children under five are malnourished in the North-East, compared to 22% in the South-East. Girls from the north are 35% less likely to go to school than those from the south. The impact of inequality on the lives of girls and women is reflected starkly in health and education outcomes, nationally and between North and South (ibid, at p.10).

### **Non-implementation of some gender specific laws and policies**

Implementation of some of the gender specific laws and policies has been slower than anticipated in some cases. For instance, the implementation of the Child Rights Act and the National Gender Policy. Reasons for this include insufficient funding and gender capacity deficits at state and local government levels.

### **Setbacks in Progress**

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Some of the more challenging setbacks to the attainment of the commitments of the BPFA have been in the following areas:

Women's political representation in elective positions

Non - ratification of Gender Equality Bills/Gender specific Constitutional Reforms:

### **Women's political representation in elective positions**

The number of women elected to public offices in Nigeria did not increase after the 2019 election. Instead, there was a decline to any progress made in women's previous outings since the inception of the fourth republic, analyses by PREMIUM TIMES and the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) have shown.

When will women be allowed more space in government? This quest was more than ever before, reinvigorated ahead of the 2019 general elections. With ninety-one political parties, women appeared to have a better chance. This was evident in the number of women who declared an interest and eventually contested in the party primaries. However, the outcome of the party primaries and eventually, the general elections, was rather a setback, dashing any hope raised.

### **Fact Sheet**

A recent fact sheet released by the CDD showed that so far, 62 women have been recorded as elected, a meager 4.17 per cent of elected officials. Should this figure hold, it would represent a decline from the 2015-19 period, where women formed 5.605 per cent of elected officials.

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A previous data from the CDD prior to this year's polls showed that women have not reached 10 per cent representation since the inception of democratic rule.

### **How women fared**

Women form 49.4 per cent of Nigeria's population, according to data from the National Bureau of statistics. However, female political representation in the 2019 elections was negligible relative to the approximately half of the population they constitute, with 2,970 women on the electoral ballot, representing only 11.36 per cent of nominated candidates.

In the presidential race, some believed women were not really, ready to contest. The turn of events, weeks to the polls, seemed to have justified that assertion. Specifically, all six female presidential candidates stepped down even though their names still appeared on the ballot. The withdrawal of Obiageli Ezekwesili, a former minister, who was perceived as the most vibrant female candidate, seemed most unexpected.

Apart from the 1999 election which signaled the fourth republic that saw women occupy 15 seats in the National Assembly – three in the Senate and 12 in the House of Representatives – the number of elected female lawmakers has never been as poor as it is now in any other election at the federal level.

### **Statistics**

In this year's election, 235 women, forming 12.34 percent of candidates, contested for a seat in the Senate of which seven (6.42 percent) were elected. This remained

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constant in the 8th Senate, which also accounted for 6.42 per cent of the total number of elected senators.

The two dominant political parties, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and its main opposition, the PDP, fielded seven and ten candidates respectively.

The only female senator from Northern Nigeria, Binta Garba and the minority leader of the 8th Senate, Abiodun Olujimi, were among female contestants who lost their election bid.

In the House of Representatives, 533 women contested, with the major parties fielding a total of 31 (15 APC and 16 PDP) candidates. However, only 11 (3.05 per cent) have been elected. The figures from the 8th House have thus been halved, as it previously had 22 female lawmakers.

At the state level, no woman was elected governor. They formed 3.07 per cent of the total candidates. Of the 275 women forming 11.40% of candidates for the Deputy Governorship, four (in Enugu, Kaduna, Ogun and Rivers) were elected.

Thus, the number of female deputy governors has declined from six in the 2015 elections to four in 2019. While women have consistently held the position of deputy governor in Lagos State, the emergence of a man as deputy-governor marked a departure from the past trend.

Down from 55 female state lawmakers in the previous regime, analysis shows that only 40 women have been elected into state assemblies.

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## **Non - ratification of Gender Equality Bills/Gender specific Constitutional Reforms:**

In spite of some measure of progress with gender specific law reforms, there are a number of gender equality related bills that are pending before the state and federal legislatures. Examples include the abolition of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in Nigeria and Other Related Matters Act, 2006; CEDAW & Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa Domestication Bill; the Gender & Equal Opportunities Bill; and A Bill to prohibit and Punish Discrimination against Persons Living with HIV & Other Related Matters 2008. The Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Bill 2003 has been passed by the lower house. The return to civilian rule in 1999 also heralded wide spread calls for constitutional reform. Ongoing constitutional review processes have included robust levels of engagement by women focused civil society groups in particular around the insertion of provisions which will facilitate gender equality in Nigeria. One of these is the proposed affirmative action provision which, if included in the constitution, will enable some gains in areas such as women's political representation.

The delay in the passage of pending gender equality Bills into Law has to do with deep-rooted religious and cultural resistance. This is being addressed through sustained advocacy efforts by civil society groups and also by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development.

## **Approximate Share of National Budgets Invested in Gender Equality and Women Empowerment**

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The percentage of the national budgets awarded to the national gender machinery has remained consistently below 10% of the total federal budget within the period under review. However, there have also been several allocations per sector for interventions that were designed to address gender specific issues. These include: support for the reduction of maternal mortality in the health sector budget; funding for the training and input support to women farmers in the agriculture sector. In order to ensure transparency and ease of access to budgetary information to the general public, quarterly budget implementation reports as well as the actual budget documents are regularly published on the website of the Federal Ministry of Finance.

Despite years of sustained economic growth and expansion, Nigeria's socio-economic and human development indicators remain poor for a significant share of the population and particularly for women. Overall, Nigeria ranks 118 out of 134 countries in the Gender Equality Index. The country has some of the highest child and maternal mortality rates in the world; the latter at 545 deaths per 100,000 live births nationally with consistently higher rates in the North West and North East geopolitical zones (1,549 for rural North-East region). Gender disparities in education are significant, and particularly concentrated in the rural North, where 34 percent of primary school-age rural girls are out of school compared with 25 percent of boys. Nigerian women face different vulnerabilities bounded by the formal and informal structures and norms prevailing in the specific regions and groups they belong to.

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On March 16 2016, the Nigerian Senate rejected a bill sponsored by a female senator, Mrs. Biodun Olujimi, seeking to empower women politically and economically as well as grant them equal opportunities with men in diverse human endeavors. It was a major pull back in the fight for gender equality in Nigeria to have the male dominated parliament throw out a bill that would have protect girls from being married of early, ensure they remain in school and help tackle domestic violence. The Nigerian National Assembly is yet to put adequate laws in place to domesticate the provisions of CEDAW and women continue to be the victim of such careless and discourteous neglect by the body that is supposed to protect them.

In Nigeria, several socio-cultural factors are responsible for the rampant violation of women's rights in Nigeria. Domestic abuse, sexual abuse and violence against women and girls continue to be perpetrated with impunity because the justice system does not have the required technical forte to bring perpetrators to book largely trampled upon because of many factors. The Evidence Act needs to be reviewed and conditions for admitting evidence should be relaxed. There is also a lack of faith in constituted authorities to ensure victims get justice and perpetrators are punished.

Customary laws which are largely used in matters such as inheritance, widowhood and marriage practices make women subservient to men. Harmful widowhood practices continue to thrive in certain communities, women are still viewed as properties in others while forced child marriages are a norm in others. A lot of

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cultures still forbid women from exceeding a certain age be practice the ancient believe that it is waste of resources to send a girl child to school, encouraging parents to give them out for marriage at a tender age, while other customs still insist on female genital mutilation, which exposes the child to various health hazards.

Nigeria's labor law ensures equal rights and same regulations of employment for both men and women with the exception that women cannot work at night and may not be employed on underground work in mines.

Politics in Nigeria, especially seeking elective position is an expensive venture requiring huge financial involvement and solid financial backing. Generally, the relatively pathetic poor financial disposition of Nigerian women is a critical challenge, which mostly accounts for their poor participation in politics and political defeat in elections. About 90% of women in Nigeria, according to Ngara et al (2013), currently live below poverty line, so in spite of concession granted by some major political parties which lowers the cost of obtaining party nomination forms for women into elective office, nonetheless, the cost of realizing electoral ambition is still far beyond the reach of even the most highly placed women in the absence of "a godfather who foots the bill in exchange for unlimited favor when the seat is eventually secured"

Lack of family support and the very cumbersome electioneering and campaign process are a critical challenge to women active participation in politics in Nigeria.

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Because of the patriarchal nature of Nigerian society, it is culturally assumed that women must seek permission from the men/husbands before venturing into politics. However, if such permission is not granted, the only option for such women is to drop their political ambitions. Thus, most family members especially husbands even among the educated ones do not allow women wives to participate actively in politics in Nigeria. Many poor women political aspirants do not enjoy family support financially, socially, and otherwise

In Nigeria, women who are actively participating in politics are seen and treated as free women (prostitutes/wayward) of easy virtues, stubborn people, whores, too domineering, cultural rebellions, etc. It is observed that during campaign, the political opponents (mostly men) use the alleged loose moral standing of these women against them and often insult them directly in public. During the recently concluded 2019 general elections in Nigeria, a video went viral where the then only female senator from northern Nigeria was being verbally abused and called unprintable names in the full glare of the public by a male opponent, that incidence passed as a normal occurrence, nowhere was it recorded that the political party made him face any form of disciplinary action.

Laws are instrument of social reengineering and should constantly be modified to fit global standards. In Nigeria, the widely held view is that there is need for a constitutional overhaul. Different sections of the Nigerian constitution are still discriminatory; Section 26, of the Constitution which discriminates out-rightly, against women in the area of citizenship rights, gives Nigerian men the right to

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acquire citizenship for their foreign wives by registration while women cannot acquire citizenship for their foreign husbands. Other discriminatory sections of the constitution are;

- section 29 which legitimizes girl child marriage. Research has shown that forty-three percent(43%) of girls in Nigeria are married off before their eighteenth birthday and seventeen percent (17%) are married before they turn fifteen. The prevalence of child marriage varies widely from one region to another, with figures as high as 76% in the North-West region and as low as ten percent in the South-East. While data shows a 9% decline in the prevalence of child marriage since 2003, a definite legislative action is needed to prevent thousands of girls from being married in the coming years.
- The Federal Character policy as contained in Section 14(3) of the 1999 constitution also did not take into account the gender gap which still needs to be bridged.
- The concept of marital rape which is a major instrument used by men to perpetrate sexual abuse is still not recognized under Nigerian laws. Section 182 of the Penal Code specifically provides that “sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife is not rape if she has attained puberty.”
- The provision of Section 182 of the Penal Code impliedly provides a legal justification for child marriage.
- Section 55(1)(d) of the Penal Code also justifies spousal abuse, providing that “Nothing is an offence, which does not amount to the infliction of grievous

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harm upon any person and which is done by a husband for the purpose of correcting his wife. Such husband and wife being subject to any natural law or custom in which such correction is recognized as lawful.

- The penal code of northern Nigeria provides that an assault by a man on a woman is not an offence if they are married, if native law or custom recognizes such 'correction' as lawful, and if there is no grievous hurt. The question on the lips of everyone is "who defines 'grievous hurt?'" If grievous hurt is measured on the physical, what happens to the psychological trauma it leaves on the victim? As experts have proven, violence can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety. It clearly shows that some traditional beliefs are backed by current laws.

Laws Legislations favorable to women have been passed, especially at state level, but often, these have had little positive impact on women's lives. There is little effort and commitment on the part of government to enforce or implement the laws passed. Women themselves continue to hold back from seeking justice when such laws are breached for fear of the stigmatization that would usually follow such bold steps, cultural beliefs, fear of reprisals from family members and lack of confidence in the justice system.

A lot of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and NGOs are at the forefront of promoting public awareness on women's rights; The Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA), Sterling Law Centre, Helpline Foundation for the Needy Abuja, Lawyers Alert, FIDA, Mirabel Center amongst

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others sensitize the public, offer pro-bono legal services to victims and provide support to victims.

Another Non-Governmental Organization involved with awareness campaigns and sensitization on human rights is the Hausa Christians Foundation which predominantly operates in the north especially the Hausa speaking areas. The foundation has organized town hall meetings, medical outreaches and programs aimed at promoting the rights of people especially women and girls, this is in order to address early marriages and abduction of women.

The National Centre for Women Development (NCWD) has established an initiative of assembling gender disaggregated data to facilitate gender mainstreaming in evidence based planning and programming. In addition to this, the NBS has worked extensively in disaggregation of data by sex to enable policy makers to assess the progress made by women in all the critical sectors of our economy. The effective use of Management Information Systems has assisted extensively especially in sectors like health, education, water supply to critically evaluate the progress made by women.

## **THE FOLLOWING HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT FOR ACCELERATING PROGRESS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN NIGERIA**

- Equality
- Non-discrimination under the law

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- Access to justice

In October 2017, the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice in the Dorothy Njemanze & 3 Ors v. the Federal Republic of Nigeria, pronounced that the act of targeting women and harassing them by the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) and other state security agents constituted gender based discriminatory treatment, torture, cruel inhuman and degrading treatment.

In its judgment, the Court held that the arrest of the Plaintiffs was unlawful and violated the right to freedom of liberty, as the Defendant State had submitted no proof that these women were indeed prostitutes. The Court also found that branding the women prostitutes constituted verbal abuse, which violated the right of these women to dignity. Further, the Court held that the arrest violated the right of these women to be free from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; and also constituted gender-based discrimination.

The Court found that there were multiple violations of articles 1, 2, 3 and 18 (3) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 25 of the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol); articles 2, 3, 5 (a) and 15(1) of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); articles 2(1), 3, 7 and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); articles 10, 12, 13 and 16 of the Convention against Torture (CAT); and articles 1, 2, 5, 7 and 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

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The 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Plaintiffs were each awarded damages in the sum of Six Million Naira. It must be noted that this is the first time an international court has pronounced on violations of the Maputo Protocol.

Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls article 10 of Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and declaration 'B' of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA), goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)s.

Currently, Nigerian women are making much advancement within their society. In recent years, three male dominated professions, the Nigerian Medical Association, the Nigerian Bar Association and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, have been led by female presidents. The creation of Gender Desks in government ministries, departments and agencies provide additional avenues for the promotion of women's issues and the enhancement of the role of women in national development.

Quality education has had positive effect on growth and development especially for the female folks, in Nigeria today more women are in the forefront of world economic development due to the quality education they have received. A few of these women are mentioned below:

Mrs. Folorunso Alakija, Mrs. Obiageli Ezekwesili, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Mo Abudu amongst others. These women among others have been created a niche for

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themselves and also created employment opportunities for people thereby contributing to the growth of the economy.

In the meantime, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) held a high-level meeting on March 21, 2017 under the theme, “the Change Women Want in 2019 and Beyond,” with the aim of increasing the number of women participating in political processes and ensuring gender equality in governance. A total of 33 participants representing female politicians and activists, male champions, and gender-focused CSOs, assessed the challenges facing women’s entry into politics. On the basis of their findings, new sets of strategies aimed at improving women’s political engagement and participation were articulated in readiness for the 2019 general elections. Furthermore, a 14-point Action Plan was developed and is being advocated with the aim of contributing to SDG-5. At the same time, ‘E-Way for Development’ provided 40 women in some rural area/s with micro grants to enable them commence mini trading business and thus empower them economically. The project also includes encouraging a culture of savings and financial integration for the beneficiaries.

### **Women’s Entrepreneurship and Enterprises**

Nigeria’s Federal government has committed resources to empowering women entrepreneurs, the Business Development Fund for Women (BUDFOW) and the Women Fund for Economic Empowerment (WOFEE) being managed by the Bank of Industry (BOI). The ninety-million-naira Business Development Fund for Women BUDFOW offers female entrepreneurs soft loans at a five percent interest rate

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which they are expected to pay back over a four- year period. The interest rate and method of disbursement remain a huge source of concern to observers. As at December 2018, the BOI, through its Managing-Director said it had disbursed about twenty-two billion naira to Nigerian women to support their empowerment and entrepreneurship; these claims have however not been verified by us as access to demography of beneficiaries is unavailable to us.

### **Social Protection**

The Nigerian government has put policies in place to ensure gender-responsive social protection, a lot of the policies haven't been fully implemented hence the impact cannot be measured. Some of these policies include the National Health Insurance Scheme, conditional cash transfers, the National Social Safety Net Programme (NASSP). The NASSP when fully implemented is expected to provide social safety nets to the poorest and most vulnerable through a five hundred million US dollar fund.

The impacts of this social protection have not been felt by a huge percentage of the Nigeria's female population. Statistics indicate that women in Nigeria are poorer than their male counterparts.

### **Women living with HIV/AIDS**

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Results released on the 14th march 2019 by the Government of Nigeria indicate a national HIV prevalence in Nigeria of 1.4% among adults aged 15–49 years. Previous estimates had indicated a national HIV prevalence of 2.8%. UNAIDS and the National Agency for the Control of AIDS estimate that there are 1.9 million people living with HIV in Nigeria.

While Nigeria's national HIV prevalence is 1.4% among adults aged 15–49 years, women aged 15–49 years are more than twice as likely to be living with HIV than men (1.9% versus 0.9%.) The difference in HIV prevalence between women and men is greatest among younger adults, with young women aged 20–24 years more than three times as likely to be living with HIV as young men in the same age group. Among children aged 0–14 years, HIV prevalence according to the new data is 0.2%. Significant efforts have been made in recent years to stop new HIV infections among children.

Nigeria has shown steady progress on increasing access to treatment for people living with HIV, with the adoption of a test and treat policy in 2016. This measure has further accelerated referrals to treatment facilities for people who test positive for the virus. From 2010 to 2017, the country almost tripled the number of people living with HIV having access to antiretroviral therapy, up from 360 000 people in 2010 to more than 1 million people in 2018.

### **Refugees and Internally Displaced Women**

The major factor that has led to the displacement of women in Nigeria is conflict and Insurgency. The emergence of the militant Islamist group, Boko Haram, has

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caused millions of women and children to flee their homes and seek refuge in makeshift camps and public schools across Nigeria. In the Middle Belt region, competition between pastoralists and farmers have led to violent upheavals that have also caused thousands of people to be displaced. There are dozens of internally displaced camps scattered across Nigeria.

The Federal Government recently announced its intention to adopt a national policy on internal displacement. President Muhammadu Buhari announced this at the 2018 National Migration Dialogue on "Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for all including migrants, refugees and internally-displaced persons." He said the new policy will help regulate the internal displacement crisis and complement the fight against insurgency. This commitment has however not been brought to life as hundreds of women and girls continue to be deprived of their dignity and rights as they have no choice but to remain in the IDP camps. A large percentage of girls in the IDP camps cannot go to school, they lack access to sanitation and are sexually abused from a very tender age. Internal Displacement of women and girls is a major setback in the fight to ensure the full implementation of the CEDAW in Nigeria.

International Organizations, Donors and NGOs continue to support the government to provide basic healthcare, food and basic education at the IDP camps. In February 2019 the World Health Organization facilitated the vaccination of over a million children in IDP camps across North-East Nigeria.

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## **The Effects of Conflicts and Climate Change on the Implementation of the BPfA/CEDAW in Nigeria**

Conflicts and climate change-induced disasters have continued to be a major challenge the government faces in ensuring a full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action/ Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (BPfA/CEDAW) in Nigeria. For about ten years, the deadly Boko Haram insurgency in North East Nigeria has resulted in massive loss of lives, property and livelihoods. Boko Haram's Attacks and increased militarization in the region have a devastating impact on women and girls. The insurgents have continued to abduct women and girls in large numbers who become their domestic and sex slaves. The women who are not abducted have to flee their homes and villages to seek shelter in seemingly safe IDP camps and the conditions at this camps are flabby. Over seven million people are estimated to be displaced due to the insurgency and sixty-five percent of these are women. The displaced women and girls are uncertain of their future, even though make-shift schools are often funded by donors and NGOs the level of education they get from this cannot prepare them for a good future in the labor market. The federal government has created institutional mechanisms such as the Victims Support Fund to resettle the IDPs and provide infrastructure to meet their social needs but the effect of these fund have not yet become visible and data on the work they do is not readily available.

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The continuous abduction of women and girls by the Boko Haram insurgents have had an adverse effect on school enrollment and quality education in the north east as most girls and their parents fear being kidnapped while in school.

The Number of persons internally displaced as a result of the conflict with Boko Haram Is estimated to be more than 7 million while an estimated thirty-five thousand people have lost their lives, with majority of them in the north east.

In the past five years the number of IDPs in Nigeria have steadily increased, five hundred and forty-one thousand people were displaced in 2018 alone. Of this number two hundred thousand were the results of herders-farmers clashes in the Middle Belt region and the rest as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East. About two million two hundred thousand people remained displaced as at July 2019

Some of the displacements that have occurred in Nigeria, especially around the shores of the Niger-Benue River have been due to increased flooding. Increased flooding in Nigeria are a direct consequence of climate change.

The government of Nigeria needs to take more decisive steps to protect women from violent conflicts.

### **Gender Equality in Relation to Women's Role in Paid Work and Employment in Nigeria.**

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Section 17(3) of Nigeria's constitution pronounces the duty of the state to ensure there is equal pay for equal work without discrimination on account of gender, there is however no legislation enforcing this section so far. A Labor Standards Bill, was submitted to the National Assembly in 2008 but the legislators have for the past eleven years pushed it aside. If passed into law this bill will force all employers of labor to pay employees based on the amount of work and time they commit to the organization.

The constitution of Nigeria prohibits discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, gender, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties. It is the duty of the state to promote national integration by providing adequate facilities, equal opportunities and rights to all the citizens without discrimination. Citizens of Nigeria must not be subject to any disability or deprivation on discriminatory grounds.

There is no specific legal provision regarding discriminatory behavior while hiring an employee but some organizations continue to reserve certain roles to males only.

The National Industrial Court was set up to handle complaints from individuals who believe they have faced discrimination in their work places. A huge percentage of suits filed against private sector employers by their employees are based on the gender bias of these private sector employees. The public service is not known to discriminate against its workers based on gender but more needs to be done to make private sector employers comply with constitutional provisions.

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**On the issues faced by marginalized groups of women whose work or identity are criminalized or discriminated against in Nigeria.**

Nigeria does not allow or recognize Lesbians, Gays, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) rights and as such does not give any form of legal protection to the Lesbians, Gays, Bi-sexual and Transgender Queer (LGBTQ) community. Nigeria is a largely conservative country and as such only very few LGBT persons are open about their orientation; violence against LGBT people is a frequent occurrence but there are no laws to protect this group of people. LGBTQ Nigerians are fleeing to countries with progressive law to seek protection. Same-sex sexual activity is illegal in Nigeria and the maximum punishment for those caught is fourteen years' imprisonment.

Migrants and domestic workers are another group of marginalized people that are not well protected Nigerian laws; Section 65 of the constitution protects migrant and domestic workers to the effect that it gives the Minister of labour the power to make regulations providing for;

- (a) The engagement, repatriation or supervision of domestic servants;
- (b) The employment of women and domestic servants;
- (c) The housing accommodation and sanitary arrangement of domestic servants;
- (d) The conditions of domestic service generally

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) monitors the activities of employers of domestic workers. Women constitute over

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seventy percent of domestic workers and a huge percentage of this figure are young girls.

These women are mostly sourced from poor communities and transported to bigger towns and cities with the promise of a better life but later find out on arrival that they are merely slaves who have to do the bidding of their employers and live under conditions dictated by the employers.

NGOs have had to respond severally to cases of abuse meted against women and young girls working as domestic workers, a lot of these cases are brought to the lime light through posts on social media. Formal complaints are often filed to the police and NAPTIP in some cases but the instruments of the law are often not strong enough to get justice for the victims. CSOs and NGOs continue to be at the forefront of demanding for stronger legislations to protect female domestic workers in Nigeria. Just recently, in August 2009 to be precise, the plight of nine-year old Chinyere Chukwuka who was given out by her parents to a relative was brought to the attention of the Gender Department of the federal capital administration in Abuja by the Helpline Foundation for the Needy Abuja, the swift response of the FCT administration in investigating the report and handing the abuser over to law enforcements is quite commendable.

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**On Nigeria's role in the last five years to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and promote work-family conciliation.**

There is a general consensus that there is gender pay differences against females and in favor of male workers, data to prove this point is however not readily available. Equal pay legislation was introduced in the Nigeria over 40 years ago. Gender equality legislation was further reinforced by the 2007 Gender Equality Duty applying to all public bodies and aspects of the 2010 Equality Act. However, Nigeria still has a long way to go in order to achieve equality in workplace. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2009) indicates that Nigeria's gender pay gap is one of the highest in the world and females are under-represented in the higher paid, more powerful positions. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), (2009) observes that between 1985 and 2008, inequality in Nigeria worsened from 0.43 to 0.49 placing the country among those with the highest inequality levels in the world.

Despite its vast resources, Nigeria ranks among the most unequal countries in the world. The poverty problem in the country is partly a feature of high inequality which manifests in highly unequal income distribution and differential access to basic infrastructure, education, training and job opportunities. In the past three decades, women in Nigeria have made notable gains in participation in the workplace including increased labour force participation, substantial gains in educational attainment, employment growth in higher paying occupations, and

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significant gains in real earnings. However, notwithstanding these gains, there is still pay gap between males and females across almost all occupations in favor of men. The Nigeria Human Development Report (2009) highlights agreement in principle on the desired path of development among independent development experts and Nigerian government officials. The declared goal of "growth with equity," is however, faced by many obstacles to its implementation.

Not much has been achieved in the past five years to close the pay gap between women and men. There has been calls by NGOs for the government to reserve certain roles and jobs to be filled in exclusively by women.

Worthy of note is the Federal Government of Nigeria's National Social Investments Programme (NSIP) which was launched in 2016, to tackle poverty and hunger across the country. The set of programme under the NSIP focuses on ensuring a more equitable distribution of resources to vulnerable populations, including children, youth and women. Data released by the NSIP office shows that, since 2016, the National Social Investments Programme (NSIP) programs combined have supported more than 4 million beneficiaries' country-wide.

**Some issues faced by women living in poverty, in rural and urban settings, ethnic minorities, indigenous women, refugees, and other marginalized groups of women and girls in Nigeria**

**Inadequate HealthCare and Sanitation:** A huge percentage of women in Nigeria lack access to adequate health care and sanitation. Antenatal care is not free in

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government owned hospitals and primary healthcare centers are not easily accessible for women in remote villages and rural communities hence leaving them with no option than to rely on unregulated traditional health providers. Traditional midwives still continue to be the only option for pregnant women. The traditional healthcare providers do their best but in a lot of situations they operate in unsanitary conditions and are unable to provide accurate diagnosis for complicated health challenges, this has continually led to the increase in the maternal mortality rate in Nigeria.

Sanitary pads are also very expensive because they are heavily taxed, women do not have the money to purchase this necessary merchandises and are forced to use banana leaves or torn wrappers which are repeated, this leads to infections and make the women stay away from others during their menstruation period.

**Harmful Traditional Practices:** Women in Nigeria continue to be victims of harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriages leading to Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF), harmful widowhood practices such as drinking the water used to wash a husband's corpse to prove the woman is not complicit in the husband's death amongst others. Although NGOs continue to advocate for a stop to some of the practices the different communities involved are yet to totally erase the practices.

**Unemployment:** Nigerian women lack access to economic opportunities compared to the men, they are not adequately represented in parliament and other public offices hence cannot bring the "Women Perspective" to the policy

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formulation table. A lot of women and girls do not have access to basic education and other employability skills hence they are unemployable and often have to take on menial jobs for inadequate pay.

**Lack of Access to Basic Education:** As earlier stated, a lot of factors are responsible for low enrollment of girls in schools; community sees the girl-child as a commodity not worth investing in because she will eventually be married out. Sometimes because of poverty, the family will rather have the girl go out to hawk or work as a domestic servant to bring in money to take care of other members of her family.

**Lack of Access to Social protection:** The government needs to do more to build infrastructure, make legislations and implement policies to ensure the basic needs of women and girls in Nigeria are met. Adequate health, education, nutrition and policies to guide other social services must be put in place.

**Poverty:** Nigerian women, like their counterparts in developing countries perform complex multiple roles as mothers, workers and managers of households, taking care of their husbands, children and members of their extended families. They perform the majority of the work in food processing and dominate the rural and urban informal sector. Yet less than 20 percent of women own their own farm lands, fewer than 10 percent have access to agricultural inputs and less than 5 percent have access to agricultural credits to enhance their productivity and incomes while women in the towns are engaged predominantly in the informal sector, in commerce and distributive trade.

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Several women associate poverty with food insecurity and inability of women to provide food for family members. Such a situation makes women anxious, inadequate and helpless. Responses from women revealed that poverty is multidimensional, but essentially relates to the inability to provide the basic needs of life like food and shelter and clothing to make life worth living. Failure to attain this level leads to loss of self-dignity. Poverty is manifested in malnutrition, which could cause ill health, a feeling of marginalization, insecurity to life, feeling of helplessness and so on.

Poverty exposes women and their families to varying kinds of danger as a result of their inability to access the basic material needs. Poverty may take the form of hopelessness and sense of desperation. For many women, the impact of poverty is felt directly through their inability to minimally care for the needs of their children as children are very central to women's lives. The concern of poor women over the inability to satisfy their children's needs is reflected in a feeling of insecurity, inadequacy and anxiety.

Poverty has also led to an increased rate of suicide among women in the past five years; in 2017, Helpline Foundation for the Needy Abuja was called upon to intervene and provide relief for a woman in Gwagwalada community who was found on the verge of committing suicide, her frustrations and choice to take her own life stemmed out of her inability to care for her five children and the huge burden of repaying a loan her husband took before his own unfortunate demise, Helpline had to include her into one of the clusters for the Non-Profit Revolving

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Loan Scheme and things had since improved for the woman. Just like her, the yearnings of the poor Nigerian women can be met by providing certain minimal but basic needs.

**Conflicts and Insecurity:** As earlier stated in this report various violent conflicts occurring in Nigeria have made it impossible for the average Nigerian woman to realize her full potentials. The Boko Haram insurgency in the North East which has resulted in massive loss of lives, property and livelihoods, the herders-farmers clashes in the middle belt and north west and varying cases of Kidnap, rape and abuses against women in the South continue to prevent the full implementation of the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in Nigeria.

### **On Nigeria's fiscal consolidation measures to improve the lives of women.**

The Federal Government, in 2014 introduced some austerity measures and scaled down the crude oil bench mark for the 2015 budget. In a bid to insulate the economy from falling crude oil prices the federal government announced far-reaching policy measures to deal with the crashing crude oil prices, cutting 2015 oil benchmark from \$78 to \$73 per barrel. Crude oil prices dropped to \$77.76 per barrel, some cents below the \$78 earlier proposed to the National Assembly as benchmark for the 2015 budget. The sale of crude oil continues to be the largest means of generating revenue to fund federal budget.

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Since 2015 the present administration has committed more resources into improving and rebuilding the country's poor infrastructure. Roads and bridges are being reconstructed, rail transportation is being revived and expanded and new initiatives to improve power distribution is embarked upon.

Nigerian government has in the past five years embarked on projects that are geared towards providing an enabling environment for industries to thrive.

### **Are the Nigerian authorities working at maximum capacity?**

Nigeria operates a federal structure with three levels of government; the Federal, State and Local governments. More power is concentrated at the center, which is the federal government because this is the level of government that controls the distribution of financial resources in the country.

Decades of activists demanding for local government financial autonomy only finally yielded result in May 2019 as President Muhammadu Buhari granted financial autonomy to local governments in Nigeria, this new move will give local authorities access to financial resources which should be channeled towards projects that will improve the lives of people in their communities.

The three arms of government in Nigeria; the executive, legislature and judiciary cannot be said to working in maximum capacity, especially the legislature. It is generally known that Nigeria has one of the highest paid legislative workforce in the world but the amount of work they do is not proportionate to their pay.

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## **On improving access to social protection for women and girls in Nigeria in the past five years.**

Article 4 of Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) emphasizes that social protection systems is a major task for all governments. The main purpose of social protection is to reduce poverty and improve the lives of its citizens especially the vulnerable.

In the past five years, the office of the vice president of Nigeria has been responsible for the administration of social protection programmes and have focused on six social protection programmes out of which only one is targeted specifically at women. The Micro-Credit Scheme for women is aimed at providing sixty thousand naira each (one hundred and ninety-two US dollars) as one-time soft loans for one million market women and female farmers.

Different states have their own social protection programmes designed to meet the specific needs of women in their states but NGO's are at the forefront of driving Nigeria's social protection agenda.

The impact of the social protection programmes still remain largely immeasurable as agencies involved are not transparent enough to provide data on their work. Corruption and accountability are also major clogs in the wheels of progress.

## **On improving health outcomes for women and girls in Nigeria in the last five years.**

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Nigeria has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world. The country's estimated 40,000 maternal deaths annually account for approximately 14% of the global total, according to the [African Population and Health Research Center fact sheet](#).

A major reason for these deaths is that many women, particularly in rural areas, do not have access to the primary health centers for antenatal care, post-natal care, or childbirth. The country's thirty-three thousand primary health centers are central to the government's health strategy and even though huge budgetary allocations are made to that sector, the health centers largely remain underequipped.

The federal government in the past five years have however been opened to learning new ways of improving primary healthcare, they have opened up their facilities and giving support to research institutions to carry out NEEDS assessment in the health sector; A research funded through the Innovating for Maternal and Child Health in Africa initiative is generating empirical evidence to support this revitalization effort with evidence-based recommendations. A team comprising researchers from the Women's Health and Action Research Centre of Nigeria and the University of Ottawa is identifying the barriers preventing pregnant women from using primary health centers in two local government areas in Edo state: Esan South East and Etsako East. Working in collaboration with the Edo State Primary Health Care Development Agency, the team is also testing innovative interventions in the centers and among community members to improve maternal care.

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This initial survey found that the majority of women, 62%, were receiving antenatal care in a primary health center but only 47% of women who had recently given birth had delivered at a health center.

### **On actions Nigeria has taken in the last five years to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls**

#### **Education and Training for Women**

In spite of notable milestones in closing gender gaps in the education sector, gender inequality in education has remained a perennial issue in Nigeria and the achievement of equal status in educational attainment by men and woman remains a key national development target. The importance for development of girls' education cannot be overstated. Educated women are more likely to use health services and to have fewer and better-nourished children, and their children are more likely to survive childhood illnesses. Girls who are educated will also contribute to future economic growth. Out of an estimated 10 million 'out of school' children in Nigeria, majority are girls, mainly in the Majority-Muslim north. (Country Gender report, 2012). Of the young women aged 20-29 in the North-West, 70.8% are unable to read or write compared to 9.7% of their counterparts in the South-East. (ibid) Several reasons explain this: early marriage, early childbirth, poor sanitation, and the shortage of female teachers. Of those fortunate enough to enroll, less than two-thirds complete primary school and even fewer girls finish secondary school. In regions where women have a lower social status, many parents opt to send their girls to work in markets or give them out in marriage

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instead.

Policies and interventions towards improving women's access to education received a tremendous boost over the past eight years (2007-Date). The lowest allocation of N75.71 billion was in 1999 (4.46%) while the highest was in 2013 when education sector was allocated 509.04 billion naira which represents 9% of the total budget. The country budgeted N398bn on education in 2017. In 2018, Buhari initially proposed N496.9bn, but it was later raised to about N605.8bn by the National Assembly.

In order to facilitate the availability of additional funding for the education sector, business management organizations and professional groups continue to advocate for an improved tax regime, expanded and the elimination of some existing less tax holidays for foreign investors.

More recently, the emerging insurgency threat in parts of Northern Nigeria has led to the closure of several schools while Government continues to explore mechanisms for improving access for girls (and boys) who are most affected by this turn of events.

In a bid to elevate the standards of girl child education, the Federal Government has also launched the policy framework on Girls and Women Education. The Federal Government of Nigeria, in partnership with UNICEF and other development partners have been working to promote girls' education and various

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initiatives have been undertaken including the Girls Education Project (GEP) geared towards promoting and enhancing girls' participation in education.

The GEP was inspired by an earlier initiative, the African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI) delivered through United Nations International Children & Emergency Funds (UNICEF) and its government partners and funded by the Norwegian Government.

This intervention recorded remarkable progress including a 28% increase in Girls' enrollment rate and an 80% decrease in drop-out rates for girls in the intervention schools. AGEI emanated from the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) and led to the establishment of the

Nigerian Girls' Education Initiative (NGEI) whose main aim is to improve the quality of life of girls in Nigeria through a collaborative approach to their education, with strong networks with CSOs and Federal and State governments.

The Girls' Education Project (GEP) emerged from this broader strategic alliance as a tripartite undertaking by DFID, the Government of Nigeria and (UNICEF). It is also the largest DFID/UNICEF partnership in the world with the aim to boosting girls' participation in Northern Nigeria where it is being implemented in six northern States (Bauchi, Sokoto, Jigawa, Katsina, Borno and Niger). The girls' education initiatives take an inter-sectoral approach, including interventions in the fields of health, water and sanitation and income generation activities to support girls in school to accelerate progress towards MDGs 2 and 3, but also impact on the other

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six MDGs, especially the health MDGs.

Furthermore, in order to address the shortage of teachers in the rural primary schools, the female teacher-training scholarship (FTTSS) award scheme was instituted in 2008. The FTTSS Scheme was introduced through a partnership between the state and local governments, the Girls' Education Project (GEP 2) and UNICEF, and it targets four northern states of Nigeria— Bauchi, Katsina, Niger and Sokoto. The primary focus is to incentivize young women from marginalized areas (particularly remote rural areas) who are qualified to study for the Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE) but are unable to do so due to funding constraints, lack of information and the means to apply for admissions. Selected candidates are funded through the scheme to undertake the three-year teacher-training course at the state college of education, leading to the award of the NCE. Successful candidates agree to return to their rural communities to teach in primary schools. The scheme began in the 2008/2009 academic session with a total of 674 female candidates. As of 2011, a total of 3,246 candidates are pursuing their education under the scheme. The State and local governments have progressively increased their financial support to the scheme, from 454 students (67 per cent) in 2008/2009 to 2598 students (80 per cent) in 2010/2011. The success of the programme has been demonstrated by high and improved retention rate of young women currently enrolled in the course. A follow-up initiative is planned to assess and address the rate of absorption into the teaching force by the government and to follow up their impact in enrolment and retention of girls

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in schools in the rural areas.

The Nigerian Government has also initiated a number of key policies, which target improved access to education for women and girls

In response to the growing insurgency threat in parts of North Eastern Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Education working with state governments, community leaders and a range of educations sector stakeholders has designed the 'safe school initiative'. The Initiative was launched in April 2014 and aims to enable the emergence of a holistic approach to the protection of girls and women of school age.

## **On the forms of violence against women and girls that Nigeria has prioritized for action**

### **Confronting Gender Based Violence (GBV)**

The 2008 NDHS revealed that 28 per cent of Nigerian women aged 25-29 have experienced one form of physical violence since age 15 with 15 per cent of those women experiencing physical violence within 12 months preceding the survey. The level of exposure to risk of violence varied based on Geographical location, educational attainment, marital status and other indices.

Geographical location also has implications for women's experience of violence with women in urban areas reporting significantly higher prevalence of violence (30 per cent) than women in the rural areas (26 per cent). Women in the south-

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south zone of the country experienced highest rate of violence across the country, at 52.10 per cent followed by north central, south-east and south-west at 31 per cent, 29.6 per cent and 28.9 per cent respectively. The north-east and northwest were lowest at 19.7 per cent and 13.1 per cent respectively.

Sexual violence knows no boundaries, as women in both urban and rural areas in Nigeria experience sexual violence alike, 6.9 per cent and 7.1 per cent respectively.

### **Administrative and Legal Measures**

In this regard, the legal framework is constantly being strengthened to protect women and girls. The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition Bill (VAPP) was passed by the House of Representatives on 14 March 2013 and has since been transmitted to the Senate for concurrence.

### **Targeted Efforts on Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Over the years, Government has intensified efforts towards the prohibition of female genital mutilation with a view to eliminate this harmful practice. Awareness raising activities including campaigns have been carried out by key stakeholders. Although at present there is no legislation at the federal level prohibiting FGM, but there are extant laws in 26 states (see table 2.1 above). In effect, over two-third of the country have laws in place to protect the rights of women against any form of violence.

### **Dealing with Abductions and Internally Displaced**

There is no doubt that crisis situation in Nigeria especially in the Northern parts of the country has escalated and have led to an increase in the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) across the country. Nigeria is said to have over 3,000,000

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IDPs with over 20 camps across the affected states.

In response to this, Government set up some interventions such as:

- Presidential Initiatives to support infrastructural development and reconstruction in the crisis affected areas.
- Save Schools Initiatives Project initiated by United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, Mr. Gordon Brown and a coalition of Nigerian Business leaders in May 2014 to provide additional security and security personnel for pupils and students including provision of school facilities to ensure safe, secure and conducive environment for learning.
- The Victims Support Fund which was able to raise N100 Billion (\$625m USD) in support of the care and rehabilitation for the victims of Boko Haram, who have been predominantly women and children.

### **Trafficking in Women and Exploitation for Prostitution**

#### Legislative and Legal Measures

NAPTIP's experience over the years has highlighted the need to amend the enabling law of the agency, hence the presentation of the Bill for an Act to Amend the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement Administration Act of 2003 to the National Assembly in 2013. The Law is aimed at bringing the current anti-trafficking legislation in conformity with the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and also to clarify definitions of different offences, removing the option of fine and increasing penalty for traffickers. The law if passed will recognize and sanction new offences based on the dimensions of crimes associated with trafficking in persons

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that are not covered by the existing law.

### Administrative Measures

Despite the gaps in the existing law, several administrative measures have been put in place to drive effective response to TIPs:

- The Federal Executive Council (FEC) approved the National Policy on Protection Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria and the National Strategic Plan on TIP in November 2008. This Policy adopts a holistic approach in the protection and assistance to trafficked persons through rehabilitation programmes that provide appropriate integration into their various communities.
- NAPTIP produced the guidelines for the protection of children in formal care, which was adopted by Stakeholders in December 2009.
- NAPTIP now has 8 Zonal Offices in the 6 (six) geopolitical zones and the Federal Capital Territory as opposed to 6 that were reported in 2006: Abuja, Lagos, Benin, Uyo, Enugu, Sokoto, Kano, Maiduguri and Makurdi. State Working Groups (SWG) have also been created in all of these Zones.
- Shelters — NAPTIP now operates nine Shelters located in Abuja and eight Zonal Offices. There are other shelter facilities nationwide being run by private organizations (NGOs) which NAPTIP also monitors.

There are other support services designed to meet specific needs of trafficked victims in these shelters:

- Establishment of Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund in 2008 which has been helpful in alleviating the challenge of financial constraint thus aiding the Federal

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Government to achieve more through National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP);

- Nigeria is presently collaborating with Italy, France, Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain, United States of America, Finland, Britain, Saudi Arabia, Norway, Benin Republic and Organizations such as United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Organization on Migration (IOM), UNICEF, International Labor Organization (ILO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF) etc.

- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) signed a revised Project Document and Grant Agreement to the tune of \$180,000 with National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) in areas of Training Needs Assessment, Training Curriculum and Strategy Development, NAPTIP immediate Training Priorities and Training for Law Enforcement Agencies.

- The Nigerian Police Force, Nigerian Immigration Service and social services personnel received specialized training on how to identify victims of trafficking and make appropriate referrals to NAPTIP.

**On the actions Nigeria has prioritized in the last five years to address violence against women and girls**

**Response Measures for victims of violence**

(a) Rehabilitation Services/Provision of Shelter

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There has been a remarkable increase in the number of shelters available to victims of violence since the last reporting period. Below are some of such shelters currently operational in the country.

- Lagos Project Alert — Sophia's Place (NGO); Provides a safe, quiet and serene space for women (and their children) seeking time and space away from their abusive environments Lagos state Government 156-bed shelter for women and children victims of GBV
- Rehoboth Homes — Women of Global Impact of the Redeemed Evangelical Mission (TREM); Houses stranded ladies who have been trafficked, and who are deported or repatriated into the country.
- Genesis House by Freedom Foundation; Helps sexually abused ladies and former commercial sex workers within the ages of 13 and 25 years
- Rehabilitation Centre (Peace Villa) by The Real Woman Foundation Rehabilitation center for girls and young women who have been victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. Runs rehabilitation programme, which runs for six months, it includes counseling and vocational training.
- Hope House by Pastor Bimbo Odukoya Foundation (PBOF); Provides shelter for pregnant single girls aged between 13 and 23 years. The girls are sometimes victims of abuse
- Media Concern Initiatives (MEDIACON); Provides shelter for sexually abused young people
- Echoes of Mercy and Hope Foundation; Provides shelter for sexually abused and street girls between the ages of 12 and 17 years.

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- (Abuja, Lagos, Benin, Uyo, Enugu, Kano, Sokoto and Maiduguri) National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP Eight (8) shelters across the country mainly for rescued victims of trafficking.
- Enugu Women's Aid Collective (WACOL) Provides temporary accommodation to female victims of battery and violence.
- Ekiti State Ministry of Women Affairs — Social Intervention Home
- Transition/temporary shelter for abused/displaced women
- Abuja Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development Temporary shelter for abused women and victims of domestic violence
- Cross River Destiny Care Centre Home for abandoned children and those who suffer sexual abuse
- Mothers Against Child Abandonment Home for pregnant teenagers
- Kaduna State collaboration with UNFPA and State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development Shelter construction is at finishing stage.
- Osun State Osun State Ministry of Women Affairs Temporary Shelter for battered women.

### (b) Hotlines and Helpline Services

In order to enhance response to incidences of Gender Based Violence (GBV) several government agencies and civil society organizations have hotlines/helplines on GBV albeit focusing on different and specific aspects of GBV. Most of the hotlines run 24 hours some of which are toll free.

### (c) Counseling and Medical Services

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Several organizations offer different types of counseling services tailored to their areas of expertise for people who have experienced or are experiencing physical or sexual violence. Some of such counseling service providers are Lagos state Ministry of Youth, Sports and Social Development, Project Alert, Girls' Power Initiative (GPI), Women's Aid Collective (WACOL), Civil Resource Development and Documentation Centre (CIRDDOC), Mirabel Centre, Hello Lagos, MEDIACON, Office of the Public Defender (OPD) etc. Majority of the services provided are legal counseling, group and individual counseling, and health related counseling. Some organizations offer victims Psychosocial and Trauma counseling/management. The Mirabel Centre also provides sexual assault trauma counseling services.

(d) Training/Capacity building (Police, Health Care Workers, Counselors and Others)

Targeted training of professionals who interact with those impacted by GBV has been a critical aspect of efforts being taken to address the problem of GBV and HIV. Such training covers knowledge and information sharing, sensitization as a first step in changing norms, attitudes, and behavior, as well as strengthening the technical skills needed to implement a range of services and support to victims of GBV.

(e) Awareness raising, Mobilization and Advocacy

The Government, its partners and other stakeholders routinely carry out enlightenment campaigns during the annual 16 days of activism on violence against women to raise awareness on issues of GBV across the country. Various groups have held awareness campaigns in tertiary and secondary institutions to

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raise awareness on both GBV and VAW among youths in formal educational institutions. Others have media campaigns — television and radio programmes.

### (f) Mobilizing men in the fight against GBV

The involvement of men is crucial to achieving the desired change in gender based norms which fuels the incidence of GBV. To this end, various organizations are mobilizing men and boys to reduce GBV and promote gender equity and equality. The Ebonyi Men's Resource Centre (EB-MRC) which is hosted by Daughters of Virtue and Empowerment Initiative (DOVENET) has a network of men, allied with women, acting as role models in violence prevention and positive masculinity. The UNFPA carries out a yearly dialogue with young boys and traditional rulers on their role in eliminating gender based violence while the UN-Women has a network of male champions on VAW.

### **Dealing with Abductions and Internally Displace**

There is no doubt that crisis situation in Nigeria especially in the Northern parts of the country has escalated and have led to an increase in the number of internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) across the country. Nigeria is said to have over 3,000,000 IDPs with over 20 camps across the affected states. In response to this, Government set up some interventions such as:

- Presidential Initiatives to support infrastructural development and reconstruction in the crisis affected areas.
- Save Schools Initiatives Project initiated by United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, Mr. Gordon Brown and a coalition of Nigerian Business leaders

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in May 2014 to provide additional security and security personnel for pupils and students including provision of school facilities to ensure safe, secure and conducive environment for learning.

- The Victims Support Fund which was able to raise N100 Billion (\$625m USD) in support of the care and rehabilitation for the victims of Boko Haram, who have been predominantly women and children.

### **On strategies adopted by Nigeria to prevent violence against women and girls**

#### **Past and ongoing humanitarian response to GBV in the northeast**

Prevention and Response: The GBV sub-sector is encouraging integrated approaches in meeting survivor needs in the northeast. Women and adolescent girl's centers for instance have been constructed within proposed humanitarian hubs including safe spaces, maternal health and reproductive health centers. One such hub has been completed in Muna Garage by UNFPA. Part of this integrated response includes provision of comprehensive response to GBV survivors through clinical management of rape services, case management and psychosocial support services.

Procurement and distribution of dignity kits (including reusable pads, culturally acceptable clothing) to women and girls and provision of skills acquisition/ skills building and livelihood support initiatives including start up grants to vulnerable women and adolescent girls from Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states. Key partners operate functional female friendly safe spaces for women and girls in Borno, Yobe

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and Adamawa. Communication, community outreach, dialogues with local and traditional leaders on GBV prevention & mitigation has been responsible for the increase in reporting of GBV cases and improving the help seeking behavior especially for child survivors. Partners within the sector have also supported capacity enhancement of frontline service providers to deliver lifesaving and effective response to address the needs of GBV survivors in areas such as Clinical Management of Rape (CMR), Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) and Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) among others. Procurement and distribution of emergency reproductive health kits, delivery kits, rape treatment kits including post exposure prophylaxis and provision of cold chain equipment to health care facilities have been central to the response too.

Coordination: Since April 2015, the GBVSWG is a functional component of the Protection Sector Working Group (PSWG) – Coordinating a comprehensive multi-sector approach to GBV prevention and response. UNFPA leads and coordinates the GBV and sexual and reproductive health sub sectors in Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Gombe and at national level. The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD) and the respective line ministries at state levels, chair the GBVSWG in Nigeria. Efforts have been made to strengthen coordination of multi-sector response to the needs of GBV survivors through periodic mapping of facilities and services, establishing referral pathways and Standard Operating Procedures. The GBVIMS is functional and currently being rolled out to timely data collection, review and analysis, communication and information sharing of critical GBV response information.

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**Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA):** Given the increasing reports on sexual exploitation and abuse within affected communities, the sub sector, developed and disseminated an advocacy note with recommendations to relevant sectors on steps to mitigate SEA. An action plan on PSEA was developed and activated within the sector, prioritized within the Protection Sector focusing multi-sector and multi-agency implementation. Progress has been made in the following areas; Advocacy campaigns with the various sectors; Information Education and Communication (Campaigns) materials on PSEA and mainstreaming documents for sectors as well as IDPs and host communities. Revision of existing complaints and feedback mechanism has been undertaken a capacity building initiatives for the military and other security personnel, and humanitarian actors. A PSEA task force/network consisting of agency and sector focal persons is being established. All in all, the humanitarian needs for life saving GBV and sexual and reproductive health interventions are identified as needing urgent attention and prioritization beyond what the current response can meet. The potential to minimize the risks of and vulnerability to GBV/SEA and provide quality multi sector care for survivors is critical. While commendable progress has been made within the sector, the context of response is still largely in emergency mode and the current operational capacity is half the required capacity for effective response. There are still challenges/major gaps in service delivery, for instance, in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, states most affected by the conflict there is no safe shelter facility to provide remedial care for survivors. The situation is fluid and constantly evolving hence the need for continuous reflection and strengthening coordinated response. The sub

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sector's priority is to scale up the current response and lobby to meet key gaps in service provision.

### **THE 2017 GBV PREVENTION AND RESPONSE STRATEGY**

The current situation in northeast Nigeria is highly complex, with many drivers and dynamics contributing to an alarming increase in protection concerns, including gender based violence. Addressing GBV, sexual violence, in the current context is a lifesaving priority. Yet the sub sector is underfunded, and simultaneously nurturing the development of its members while preventing and responding to GBV. Thus, the GBV Sub-sector will focus its efforts on key strategic areas of intervention that will maximize impact.

#### Strategic Objectives

- 1) Increase access to a comprehensive and well-coordinated GBV response services including livelihood support for survivors.
- 2) Increase awareness and enhance systems for the prevention of GBV including SEA through mitigating risk factor and strengthening community protection strategies.
- 3) Mainstream GBV into all humanitarian response and maintain the updated comprehensive data needed to inform advocacy, planning, implementation and M&E of interventions.

#### **On Sexual Violence and Abuse**

Sexual violence is a common phenomenon and occurs worldwide. Data available suggests that in some countries one in five women report sexual violence by an

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intimate partner and up to a third of girl's report forced sexual initiation (Olle, 2004). Sexual assault encompasses a range of acts, including coerced sex in marriage and dating relationships, rape by strangers, organized rape in war, sexual harassment (including demands of sex for jobs or school grades), and rape of children, trafficking of women and girls, female genital mutilation, and forced exposure to pornography. It is important to understand the ramifications of sexual assault, as not only a physical act, but also could be verbal or visual sexual abuse or any act that forces a person to join in unwanted sexual contact or attention (For woman, 2016). Sexual assault is also not discriminatory to sex; both males and females are affected but studies have shown that the number of female sexual assault victims (and assault perpetrated by males) is far greater than male victims (Isely, 1997). Studies have also documented female offenders of sexual assault whose victims may be of male or female gender including children, adolescents and adults; the motivation for the female offender being the same as that of their male counterparts: power and control (Holmes, 1998). It could be that "disbelief" attitude by the society and even of health professionals to the occurrence of male sexual assault and the unlikelihood of the male victims themselves to disclose sexual abuse make the subject and research into male sexual assault to lag behind that of the female (Bell, 1999). It can be inferred that sexual assault, like other medical, social or legal anomalies could be amenable to preventive measures. It is therefore, highlighted in the subsequent paragraphs that follow, some elements that could offer the means to prevention of sexual assault in the community. These concepts, though are applicable universally, are however discussed in the context

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of the developing world and with particular emphasis on the Nigerian situation.

Their applicability in sexual assault prevention is derived from previous studies in different parts of the world that highlight the viability of these interventions.

Therefore, if one posits that sexual assault can be prevented, certain responsibilities are imperative; some challenges must be anticipated; and special needs/circumstances should be catered for. All these will be addressed in a limited scope subsequently.

### **Public Enlightenment**

Public enlightenment has been shown to be a critical tool in changing behavior, attitude, beliefs and value system of people (Nwosu, 1986). Therefore, there should be intense public enlightenment and education at schools, social clubs, cultural group gatherings, churches, mosques and through the media, to first of all, demystify the myths about sexual assault. These myths inform the way many people think about sexual assault, and because they are in the background unconsciously influencing people's thoughts, the false assumptions may be seen as being true. For example, when we read in the newspaper that a young girl has been raped, perhaps near a nightclub, we often instinctively search for a cause other than the real one (that she was raped because a man with the power to do so decided to rape her). Perhaps we proffer the reason for the rape as tied to the place she was raped, or the time of the day, or the clothes she was wearing or the fact that she was alone. This way of thinking, deflects blame from where it rightly belongs with the perpetrator of the crime. Details of these myths are the subject of a well-researched publication (MacDonald, 1993; Ojo, 2013). This type of

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community disposition, and ignorance that detracts from tackling the real cause of sexual assault, without which preventive efforts will be futile. To champion the public enlightenment crusade, the CSOs and media occupy a major role in this respect. Recently in Nigeria, the president of African Civil Society against Rape, a Civil Society Organization, called upon Nigerians during a media parley, to join forces with the CSOs in order to heighten public enlightenment in the fight against rape and sexual violence in Nigeria (New Nigeria, 2008). The role of the CSOs would include sponsoring relevant bills at the national assembly that would toughen current legislations on sexual violence. This may include making rape, a capital offence, with protracted prison terms as advocated by the African Civil Society against Rape in Nigeria. The whole idea is to make the prospect of sexual assault to a would-be perpetrator, as unattractive as possible. *The myriads of physical and psychosocial impediments on the victims/survivors of sexual assault in particular and the society in general, would justify any tough legislative measures to curb this monstrous abuse on the integrity of individuals and by extension the entire society (Leserman, 2005).* It is important the advocacy community in its attempt to provide victim safety and offender accountability, and more importantly in prevention of sexual assault, should not isolate itself from other relevant stakeholders but rather take into account the criminal justice and treatment efforts to also address sexual offending behavior (D'Amora, 1999). Furthermore a coalition of organizations, including women groups, religious bodies, businesses, and trade unions that are speaking out against all forms of sexual violence in a manner reminiscent of the "Take a Stand" movement in South

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Africa which commemorated an International Day Against Violence Against Women, could be replicated in every community with active support of the news media (Ramsey, 2018). These enlightenment programmes paid off for the intended goals in the affected community in the past, and optimism in this important tool for public change cannot be misplaced if applied persistently in sexual assault prevention.

### **Education**

The Universal Basic Education(UBE) law passed into law over a decade ago by the Federal Government of Nigeria and adopted by all the states makes education compulsory and free for all children up to the junior secondary school level. The UBE law makes education compulsory for all children in Nigeria including the girl-child, this law however, does not put in place punitive measures against those who impede on its actualization. Education of children, especially the girl child, is undisputable a necessity for the socio-economic growth of any society. The focus of the federal government of Nigeria in placing incentives such as the home grown school feeding programme, to encourage more children to be enrolled and stay in school is commendable and has helped empower more women and girls who are often disadvantaged by the undue attention paid to the education of male children over their female counterparts especially in Northern Nigeria. This imbalance coupled with poverty and ignorance has led to persistent practice in certain parts of Nigeria where children and teenagers, instead of being in the classroom are sent out to the street to hawk petty wares by their parents or guardian to raise money that is not necessarily used to care for the child, thus making them vulnerable to

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sexual exploitation and abuse. *Child and women trafficking with the attendant risk of sexual assault and exploitation would be greatly curtailed if equal opportunity and free formal education is provided for all children (UNICEF)*. If fully funded the UBE has the potential to take children off the street thereby removing the poverty excuse given by parents and guardians as reason for not sending their wards to school. Poverty alongside some religious and cultural reasons are usually the excuses given for non-enrolment in school. The law has mandated that all Nigerian children must be rolled in schools and failure to do so, parents or guardians would be prosecuted. Sexual assault prevention requires a solid foundation and one of the pillars would be addressing the gross inequality against the girl child in the educational system (UNICEF).

### **On actions taken by Nigeria to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media**

This research reviews the way women have been portrayed by the media, we all know that the media plays a significant role in shaping public opinion in any society and Nigeria is not an exception. The media to a large extent portrays women as sex or domestic objects, though unintentionally, the narratives from the media space restricts women to certain domestic and sexual roles.

The representation of women in the media in Nigeria has been the center of attention of much research in media studies. These investigations have focused on how women are seen by those who set the media agenda in Nigeria. The issue is borne of the subordination of women by those who control mass media in

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Nigeria. Thus, in Nigeria and elsewhere, the media industry has been dominated by men. Those few women have ventured into this male-dominated industry, the few that were given the opportunity to become part of this so called exclusive club had met with great resistance especially from those who still believe in the status quo. There is now a room for this narrative to change as a Nigerian woman, Mo Abudu, a media guru single-handedly founded the Ebony Life TV, a cable TV network that tells African stories to the rest of the world through, TV programming and film production. Mo Abudu is one of the few Nigerian women in the media who have had to fight for respect, equal opportunity and credibility and remain standing. Ebony Life TV marked its 6<sup>th</sup> year anniversary and there seem to be no sign of slowing down.

Nigerian women had contributed enormously to the family unit as they specialized in maintaining their households, rearing children and emotionally supporting their respective husbands. In spite of the hardship and degree of poverty that continue to ravage the country; women continue to contribute to the economy, educational, social, cultural, and political development of the country. Gender inequality continue to dominate the media establishment as men maintain their dominance and assert their control on the industry, thus creating an atmosphere of total dominance of the profession and continue to set 'limits and the extent' to which women are involved in the decision making process. In general, women are portrayed negatively in Nigeria media. One school of thought blamed the lack of representation in Nigeria media. The "other argues that the misrepresentation of women is due to men dominating media echelon with no

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appreciation for women's role in the sustainable development of media. Although agenda and strategic targets for the improvement of women's careers in the industry have produced positive results in a number of settings. According to Amina Adam (2002), *the increasingly global and commercial structures of media institutions do not sit easily with the adoption of gender-sensitive measures*. Omenugha(2001) indicts the Nigerian media on their politics of exclusion, noting that the Nigeria media is guilty of stereotyping and is caught in this web of discordant culture that continues to exclude women. She contends that leaders in the media industry continue to give women little voice, demean them through various forms of stereotypes, and increases their vulnerability, all of which now contributes to trapping women in the vicious circle of poverty.

Many studies continue to reveal the serious under-representation of women as an obstacle to participation in the media as well as sustainable development in the industry. The Nigerian Perspectives," noted that, Nigerian culture vis-a-vis religion demanded that women are silenced, secluded.

The role and contribution of women have gone unrecognized for a long period of time. This is due in part to the culture of dominance, politics of exclusion, and inability to decentralize the industry. This political and industrial domination continue to take away the much needed voice of reasoning in women needed to enhance growth and sustainable development that would have contributed to eliminating gender bias and dependence on men as experts on issues of concern to women.

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## **Stereotypes of Nigerian Women**

In Nigeria, like in many other country, television, radio, and print media dominate and direct public opinion hence the inability of the Nigerian media to depict the importance of women participation in politics to nation building is a major impediment to gender equality. The rationale for trivialization of women is expressed by an article written by Apollo Bitros. He writes: the In Nigeria situation, a lot of historical, social research (sic) conducted, indicated the(sic) women's place is in the home. Right from childhood, children (male and female) are taught to keep the roles associated with their sexes. For example, a boy cannot be taught how to cook in the kitchen except after his seem (sic)Education he may be interested in catering studies as a professional: To drive this point home he adds; The Nigerian Constitution is the only document which would have milled(sic) and voided the role of women as mothers in our homes only provides for equality in terms of voting and contesting elections. What Bitros means here is that Nigerian women should aspire to seek equality with their male counterparts because the constitution does not relieve them from child-bearing and the domestic duties that society assigned them. As Bourgault (1995) points out, "it does not occur to (added to Bitros) new model of thinking or a new code of society" (pp. 193-194). It should be added that Nigerian press are evident of this conservative stance (Bourgault, 1995). Given such wide spread belief, as expressed by Bitros, it is endorsed by the general population. When this occurs, less powerful groups such as women are at risk of being devalued and stereotyped by the news outlets. As Short et al,

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(1995) points out, when a group is construed negatively, it is easier to rally against such group. Such a label makes it psychologically easier to discriminate against the member of the group. Endorsing this viewpoint, Anyanwu (2002) writes: A content analysis of mainstream media in Nigeria reveals one dominant orientation. Women are largely seen and not heard. Their faces adorn newspapers. However, on important national and international issues, they fade out. Even when the news is about them, the story only gains prominence if there is a male authority figure or newsmaker on the scene.

### **Gender and Conflict**

Many of the social conflict issues raised directly affect women: female genital mutilation, polygamy, property succession rights, as well as the more violent issues such as displacement, loss of loved ones and livelihoods, family disintegration, rape, and other forms of abuse against women and girls, it must be noted that the involvement of women in the media in Nigeria in recent, post-independence development. The advent of modernization coupled with creation of states as well as more radio and television broadcasting after the civil war brought women into the all male dominated industry, even though the percentage of women in media is comparatively low. Women in the media in Nigeria continue to come into conflict with this male dominating media culture that continues to discriminate against women. The media society looks at independent minded women journalists as threats to authority at home or rather sexual prey to the all-powerful men they happen to come in contact with during the course of their profession. Social attitudes also suggest that the

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media ignore prominent women's views as journalists go about looking for authoritative comment. The general consensus is that women issues are used to titillate and sell media-products, while serious gender issues are neglected.

It is a common practice in Liberia for women to buy spaces in the country's newspaper to ensure that their views are heard. Meanwhile, women journalists have to fight hard to start a woman's column and ensure that it survives.

changes led to the adoption of the Beijing Conference (1996) that led to more gender equality and women empowerment. The Platform for Action adopted by the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing brought the issue of women and media to the forefront of the media agenda. The conference pointed out twelve critical areas of concern to women. And according to UNESCO (2003), progress was made in establishing guidelines and development programs aimed at promoting an increase participation of women in the media coupled with diverse portrayal of women in the media. Nevertheless, UNESCO (2003), concluded that bias against women remains in the media. Women are becoming better organized with professional associations and other bodies to promote women agendas. Although, it must be noted that in spite of the fact that women had made head-way in the media establishment and are becoming more and more prominent, they still lag behind in managerial positions.

**On actions taken by Nigeria to address violence against specific group of women facing multiple forms of discrimination**

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The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, While taking cognizance of Nigeria's federal structure, which establishes a three-tiered system of governance at the national, state and local levels, the Committee underlines that principal responsibility for implementation of the Convention lies with the federal government and calls upon the State party to undertake all necessary measures to ensure the full implementation of the Convention in a consistent and coherent manner across its territory. It welcomed the adoption of the National Gender Policy in 2007, which constitutes a comprehensive framework for promoting gender equality and the advancement of women. The Committee encourages the State party to take the necessary measures to ensure its full implementation and operationalization. The Committee also welcomed the adoption of a number of strategies, policies and programmes on areas such as education, health, reproductive health and nutrition since the consideration of Nigeria's combined fourth and fifth periodic report in 2004. While recalling the obligation of the State party to implement all the provisions of the Convention systematically and continuously, the Committee views the concerns and recommendations identified in the present concluding observations as requiring the priority attention of the State party. Consequently, the Committee calls on the State party to focus on those areas in its implementation activities and to report on action taken and results achieved in its next periodic report. It also calls on the State party to submit the present concluding observations to all relevant ministries, to the National and State Assemblies and the judiciary in order to ensure their effective implementation.

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Noting the rejection by the National Assembly of a 2005 draft bill on full domestication of the Convention, the Committee expresses its concern that the Convention has yet to be domesticated as part of national law despite its ratification in 1985 without any reservations. As expressed in its previous concluding observations of 2004, the Committee is concerned that without such domestication, the Convention is not a part of the national legal framework and its provisions are not justifiable and enforceable in Nigerian courts. The Committee recalls its previous recommendation and urges the State party to place high priority on completing the process of full domestication of the Convention. It calls on the State party to intensify its efforts to ensure the passage of the draft bill on domestication of the Convention, including through the holding of consultations with government officials, political leaders and members of the National Assembly, civil society organizations, and other relevant stakeholders, with a view to raising awareness and broadening understanding of the Convention, as well as building support for the draft bill.<sup>13</sup> The Committee welcomes efforts undertaken by the State party in the area of legal reform, such as the publication of a study compiling all national, state and local laws, policies and practices relating to the status of women and children and the establishment of a Committee on Reform of Discriminatory Laws against Women. The Committee expresses serious concern, however, at discriminatory provisions in the Constitution, including Section 26(2), which does not allow a Nigerian woman to transmit her nationality to her foreign spouse on the same basis as a Nigerian man. The

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Committee also expresses serious concern at other discriminatory laws at both the federal and state levels, including those that allow wife battery as chastisement as long as grievous harm is not inflicted (Section 55 of the Penal Code of Northern Nigeria), prohibit women from working at night in certain sectors of employment (Section 55 of Chapter 198 of the 1990 Labour Act of Nigeria), and classify sexual assault against female victims as a misdemeanor (Section 360 of the Criminal Code). Further, the Committee notes that a draft bill on “Abolition of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Nigeria and Other Related Matters” was not approved by the National Assembly. 14. In line with its previous recommendation of 2004, the Committee calls on the State party to set a concrete timetable for amending all provisions in the Constitution and in federal and state legislation that discriminate against women. The Committee also urges the State party to accelerate and expand its efforts at legislative reform, including with respect to the laws identified in the above-mentioned study. It recommends that the State party also repeal Section 55 of the Penal Code of Northern Nigeria, Section 55 of Chapter 198 of the 1990 Labour Act of Nigeria and Section 360 of the Criminal Code, and ensure that those responsible for the implementation of these laws and policies are made aware of their discriminatory contents. The Committee also recommends that awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns be developed and implemented, involving parliamentarians, civil society and the general public, including religious and traditional leaders, in order to enhance understanding of the provisions of the Convention and support for the principle of gender equality

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and the prohibition of discrimination. It further calls on the State party to ensure that the Convention and related domestic legislation are made an integral part of legal education and the training of judicial officers, including judges, lawyers and prosecutors, so as to firmly establish in the country a legal culture supportive of women's equality and non-discrimination.

### **On actions taken in the last five years to promote women's participation in public life and decision making**

#### **EFFORTS MADE TOWARDS FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN NIGERIA.**

Several efforts have been made to address the low representation of women in elective and appointive positions in Nigeria; among such efforts are the establishment of Women Political empowerment office and Nigeria Women Trust Funds, Women Lobby Group. Other efforts include the institution of an INEC gender policy, the national multi stakeholder dialogue; the initiation of several interventions to actualize affirmative action and the convening of the Nigeria Women Strategy Conference. National Center for Women Development in collaboration with National Bureau of Statistics are making efforts to have evidenced based data about this issue. Presently the available data are not harmonized. The data collation covers the period 1999–2015 One of the objectives of the data collection is to provide a baseline for the implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The data collation exercise is ongoing. Hopes are high that the result will show the progress steadily made to achieving the affirmative declaration and determine

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how the gap that erstwhile existed has been closed as well as measure the variation between where we are and the affirmative action of 35 percent. Also, it will improve evidence-based planning and programming involving women in decision making; increase the support of key stakeholders on measures to increase representation of women in decision-making and further improved awareness of new advocacy tools among stakeholders to support the campaign for increased representation of women in decision making in Nigeria. It will also erase the un-harmonized data at present. (Daniel and Faith, 2013)

### **Challenges affecting women participation in politics in Nigeria**

The challenges facing women are enormous, however, studies have shown that the under listed are likely responsible for the huge marginalization of Nigerian women in politics.

1.Patriarchy:It refers to a society ruled and dominated by men over women, which in turn has given rise to women being looked upon as mere household wives and non-partisans in decision making process in households not to talk of coming out to vie for political positions.

2.Stigmatization: following the way politics in Nigeria is played, it is being perceived that it is for individuals that have no regards for human right and are quick at compromising their virtue for indecent gains. Therefore, women aspirants who ventured into politics are looked upon as shameless and promiscuous.

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3.Low level of education: The low participation of women in education is also part of the shortcomings. The National Adult Literacy Survey, 2010 published by National Bureau of Statistics revealed that the adult literacy rate in English in Nigeria is 50.6 per cent while literacy in any other language is 63.7 per cent (female adult age 15 and above). This explains why most women are least qualified for political offices due to low educational attainment. This is also an effect of colonialism, where men were more favored than women.

4.Meeting Schedules: The time scheduled for caucus meetings to strategize and map out political plans either for the pre or post-election periods are odd and is not conducive for responsible and family women. The slated time are often time which women are expected to take care of their children and family. This method of schedules is viewed as an attempt to side-lining women from engaging in political process.

5.Financing: Competing for political positions in Nigerian requires huge financial backup. Most Nigerian women who seek these positions could not afford meeting the financial obligations therein, despite the wavers giving to women aspirants by some of the political parties. And so, they could do little or nothing to outweigh their male counterparts.

6.Political Violence: Nigerian elections have always been characterized by one form of violence or another since the return of democracy. Female aspirants of various political parties cannot withstand political violence; therefore, women participation in politics is drastically reduced.

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7. Religious and Cultural barriers: Both Christianity and Islam do not accord women much role in public life, and same is obtainable in most cultural values, where women are seen culturally as quite submissive and image of virtue. However, they are not to be seen in public domain. And so it is a challenge to women participation in politics, more so, women found in the corridor of politics are not often religious in practice.

The following are some of the challenges faced in women's participation in decision-making processes in Africa:

a. Socio-demographic Barriers: These are factors such as age restrictions, gender norms and cultural practices which prevent women from participating in decision-making. Nzomo (1997) tied Kenyan women's limited participation in the competitive world of politics, to great responsibilities and heavy workloads associated with a woman's reproductive, domestic, and productive role.

b. Economic Barriers: Many African women usually lack the economic power necessary to fully participate in decision-making. Ballington and Matland (2004) suggested that women often lack the financial resources needed to fully participate in leadership and decision-making. Goetz and Hassim (2003) noted that circumstances of capitalist market relationships in poor countries have left women with little time and few resources for political participation.

c. Time Factors: Kiamba (2008) indicated that for many women, the time demands of such positions, conflict with the demands of the family and this in itself is a barrier.

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d. Structural Barriers: There are also other international, local resistance and structural barriers to women's participation in decision-making (Kiamba, 2008).

e. Gender Stereotypes: This implies entrenched societal and systemic gender stereotypes, which often prevent women from participating in decision-making. Zimbabwe, for example, had the 1992 Gender Affirmative Action Policy, the 1999 Nziramasanga Commission, and the National Gender Policy of 2004, advancing gender equality and removing of all forms of gender-based discrimination in the nation. However, Chabaya et al. (2009) still found gender stereotypes and a lack of support at home and in the workplace, as some of the major causes of persistent under-representation of women in school leadership and decision-making.

f. Male Resistance: Men's resistance and non-preparedness to share political power and decision-making processes with women is a global phenomenon (Schein, 2001).

### **On actions taken in the last five years to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT) in the media**

In every society, public attitudes regarding the role of women in society are major factors in deciding the status of women. In shaping these attitudes, the media exert a strong influence (MacBride, 1981). The images of women in mass media content-news, entertainment, advertising, etc. is thus seen by media experts as a

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crucially important topic because these images usually reflect in the attitudes of the society towards women in the long run.

The media world over and Nigeria in particular tend to increase women's vulnerability to gender discrimination by feeding into discriminatory stereotypes about women's roles and value to society. In several instances stories about the rich tend to dominate media headlines, which systematically excludes the poor of which 70% are women.

The media has an enormous and far reaching impact on women's empowerment. Therefore, it is essential to influence gender balance across different layers of authority within the media in order to secure respect for women's human rights and dignity. In recognition of this, women focused civil society organizations have continued to focus on dialogues and gender awareness training for senior management teams and proprietors of major media establishments.

The Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), established 25 years ago, stands as a key pillar in the efforts to increase women access and leadership in the media. With its focus on encouraging women to become journalists and to support the development of existing journalists to become respected members of their newsrooms, NAWOJ plays a critical role in ensuring that Nigeria's media has a strong and active female contingent. NAWOJ has also become a focal within some interventions by national and international partners. For instance the UNDP Democratic Governance for Development (DGD II) project began a strong working relationship with NAWOJ in 2012 and has focused since then on building their capacity to not only encourage women to become journalists, but also to

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consolidate their efforts in bringing gender issues into the national limelight and into electoral processes. Part of this engagement includes targeted training for women journalists on how to cover issues that have not traditionally been assigned to women, such as defense and finance.

The FMOWASD has also been involved in systematic efforts to integrate media participation in all gender equality and women empowerment initiatives. This is being done through media training, inclusion of media representatives as participants in all activities and programmes. In recent years, the contributions of women to leadership and national development, is receiving more coverage and attention from the mainstream print and electronic media. More women, and the organizations they head, now get more print media space and air time on the basis of personal recognition, based on excellence in their chosen professions or careers.

The media is also better responsive to agitations against negative gender stereotypes. A few years ago, one of the major telecommunications companies had an advert that overtly suggested and reinforced the notion that a male child is preferable to a girl child. It provides a ray of hope that the advert was subsequently withdrawn in the wake of outcries that the advert was gender insensitive and discriminatory.

The social media remains a veritable tool for mobilization of citizens especially young people who have access to ICT to organize and drive advocacy. This is currently being explored at different levels to mobilize especially young people against GBV by raising their level of knowledge on such issues and creating

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platforms for them to speak out on issues of violence against women in the Country. The UNFPA is one of the in-country organizations driving efforts at using this medium to reach young people. However the rural youth continues to be excluded due to infrastructural challenges. To become respected members of their newsrooms, NAWOJ plays a critical role in ensuring that Nigeria's media has a strong and active female contingent. NAWOJ has also become a focal within some interventions by national and international partners. For instance the UNDP Democratic Governance for Development (DGD II) project began a strong working relationship with NAWOJ in 2012 and has focused since then on building their capacity to not only encourage women to become journalists, but also to consolidate their efforts in bringing gender issues into the national limelight and into electoral processes. Part of this engagement includes targeted training for women journalists on how to cover issues that have not traditionally been assigned to women, such as defence and finance.

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**Do you or the state track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?**

**Approximate share of national budgets invested in gender equality and women empowerment**

The percentage of the national budgets awarded to the national gender machinery has remained consistently below 10% of the total federal budget within the period

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under review. However, there have also been several allocations per sector for interventions that were designed to address gender specific issues. These include: support for the reduction of maternal mortality in the health sector budget; funding for the training and input support to women farmers in the agriculture sector.

As part of the process of boosting government spending on gender equality and women's empowerment, the GWiN initiative was established in 2013 with 3 billion Naira startup funds to support 5 pilot Ministries. In order to ensure transparency and ease of access to budgetary information to the general public, quarterly budget implementation reports as well as the actual budget documents are regularly published on the website of the Federal Ministry of Finance.

Policies and interventions towards improving women's access to education received a tremendous boost over the past eight years (2007-Date). Comparison of data of 2002 to 2013 shows that budgetary allocation to education sector had witness a gradual increase. The lowest allocation of N75.71 billion was in 1999 (4.46%) while the highest was in 2013 when education sector was allocated 509.04 billion naira which represents 9% of the total budget.

In 2004, with concerted civil society lobbying of the National Assembly, the Ministry of Health was able to secure for the first time a budget line for reproductive health, with specific funding for safe motherhood.

One of the key gender – specific milestones of the period under review is the gradual integration of gender and social inclusion targets in economic policies, development frameworks and government budgets. This marks a significant

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departure from the prior compartmentalization of gender issues as ‘social issues’ only, without the extremely critical link to economic justice and empowerment. It also represents a symbolic paradigm shift from ‘gender neutrality’ in economic policy tone and content to a more gender responsive national development architecture

The National and State Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (NEEDS and SEEDS), which served as economic blue prints between 2003 and 2008 identified gender gaps in their respective situation analyses and policy priorities. Women, youth and other vulnerable groups have been identified as a critical cluster within the National Vision 20:2020 document and the Transformation Agenda. In 2013, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) launched the National Financial Inclusion Framework, which targets the expansion of access to financial services to previously marginalized groups by up to 70% by the year 2020. The ‘Growing women and Girls Initiative’ (GWiN) was also launched in 2013 as a mechanism of the Government to provide additional budgetary support to Federal Ministries who are able to show concrete spending commitments to women and girls per fiscal year. As at the time of producing this report, five 9 pilot Ministries at Federal level have benefited from the GWiN programme (FMOWASD, 2014). These are: the Federal Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Information Communication and Technology, Works, Water Resources with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development providing Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) support.

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One of the programmes which have been conceptualized to ensure gender and social inclusion as part of economic planning is the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YOU WiN) initiative.

The YOU WiN initiative creates a platform for young female entrepreneurs to access technical and financial business support through a competitive, transparent application process. As at 2012, at least 5000 young female entrepreneurs have accessed both technical and financial business startup support from the YOU WiN initiative (FMF, 2012). Another significant development, which occurred in the 2012 fiscal year with the introduction of the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE – P) in February 2012. SURE – P was launched as a complement to the Federal Budget over the next 3 – 4 years. The aim of the SURE –P is to ensure that the funds that accrue to the Federal Government from the partial withdrawal of subsidies on Premium Motor Spirit (PMS, also commonly referred to as ‘fuel’) are redirected towards critical infrastructure and social safety nets. Information available from the records of the Federal Ministry of Finance, show that as at December 2013 the SURE P funds had been used for interventions such as: child healthcare, pre and post natal care, rail rehabilitation, road reconstruction, graduate employment and internship.(FMF, 2013). The Community Service, Women and Youth Employment Programme was established as part of SURE P in order to tackle youth unemployment by creating jobs for at least 10,000 youth at federal and state levels respectively. Out of this total, at least 30% must be women. Entrepreneurs who have benefitted from this initiative are

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also provided with ongoing skills training around business management and growth in order to ensure sustainability and ownership.

Factors which have contributed to these developments include strengthened inter sector synergy and collaboration; sustained advocacy by civil society groups and the provision of technical support by international partners.

**BUDGET ANALYSIS** The approach to HIV response in Nigeria is multi-sector. The National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) coordinates the national response. Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) are expected to key into the national response based on their mandates. The MDAs include Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Youth Development and others. While NACA coordinates the response at the national level, the state agencies for the control of AIDS (SACAs) coordinate the state level and the local agencies for the control of AIDS (LACA) coordinate activities at the local government level. The National Assembly is also a critical institution in the national response because of its role in budget appropriation. Although, the budgetary allocations of all MDAs for HIV Programme in Nigeria are critical to the effectiveness of the national response, this analysis is limited to the gender equality related components of the budgets of NACA and Benue State. According to the 2016 Appropriation Act as passed by the National Assembly, the total budgetary provisions stood at Six Trillion, Sixty Billion, Six Hundred and Seventy-Seven Million, Three Hundred Fifty-Eight Thousand, Two Hundred and Twenty-Seven (N6,060,358,227) Naira only. Out of this total provision, the Ministry of

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Health was allocated N221, 412, 548, 087 representing 3.65% of the total budget.

The Ministry of Women Affairs on the other hand, was allocated N1, 261,723,837, representing 0.02% of the total budget, while NACA was allocated N4,207,757,600 representing 0.06% of the total budget. A combination of these sectoral provisions of Health, Women Affairs and NACA only amounts to a total allocation of 226,882, 029,524 representing merely 3.74% of the total budget. NACA has a total allocation of N4,207,757,600.00 in the 2016 Budget representing 0.06% of the total Federal Government 2016 spending, out of which N781, 215, 253 representing 19.6% is appropriated for recurrent expenditure, i.e. Personnel and Overheads Costs and Capital Expenditure stands at N3,426, 542, 347 representing 81.4% of the total allocation.

### **On Nigeria's effort to track the proportion of official development assistance (ODA) that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)**

The country recognizes that technology-based, open and transparent progress-tracking; performance accountability and reporting systems for nationally agreed targets against set benchmarks, are critical for the success of the CEDAW implementation. The response of the legislature to call by civil society and NGOs to adopt gender responsive budgeting approach when screening budget requests from MDAs, remain unimpressive. Despite setting up gender desks in both arms of the National Assembly, much is still left to be desired in this regard.

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## **On Nigeria's national strategy or action plan for gender equality?**

The Ministry developed an Action Plan on UN Resolution 1325 in response to the mandate of the United Nations Security Council that State Parties (Governments) implement UN Resolution 1325. Nigeria is a UN member state and having adopted and ratified the resolution, it is mandatory for the country to draw up an Action Plan on UN Resolution 1325, even when there is no war, every member state is expected to come up with the National Action Plan (NAP). The Nigerian society is not at war but is not free from various conflicts.

The overall goal of the project is to develop a National Strategic Framework and Plan of Action for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Nigeria anchored on the following priorities:

- Participation: Increased political empowerment for women and engagement at all levels of decision making.
- Justice, Protection and Peace: A more effective and credible justice and security environment for women during and after conflict.
- Economic Resource and Support: Allocation of greater and more sustainable financial resources to support women in recovery processes.

The process aims to facilitate the development of a National Action Plan that will contribute to the women, peace and security agenda. UN women (Nigeria) is

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supporting the National Gender machinery to develop and articulate strategies that would strengthen women's organizations to participate in peace processes as well as ensure that gender perspectives are included in peace keeping operations. It is expected that key government MDAs and CSOs involved in peace and security will participate in the broad process.

10The specific objectives are to facilitate the development of Strategic Framework and National Action Plan that will contribute to women peace and security agenda , as well as develop and articulate strategies that would strengthen women organizations to participate in the peace process to ensure gender perspectives and included in peace keeping, peace building, conflict resolution and management. The objectives also include the need to increase women visibility, representation and participation, leadership and decision-making in national mechanisms for prevention, management and resolution of conflict in Nigeria. The Areas of focus or the Scope is termed the PILLARS on which the NAP stands. The Pillars and areas of coverage include:

PREVENTION, PARTICIPATION, PROTECTION, PROSECUTION, PROMOTION

The Pillars known as the 5Ps have various elements which formed the strategic objectives for the NAP. The Nigerian NAP endeavored to ensure a high level of accountability, learning and planning (Monitoring and Evaluation). Accountability, Learning and Planning System will form the basis of ensuring a vigorous monitoring mechanism that does not only inject efficiency into the implementation of NAP but also a system of constant learning. A successful implementation of Nigeria's NAP on UN Resolution 1325 would largely depend on proper funding and political

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will. Although not at war, the multifarious security challenges occasioned by activities of armed groups and extant criminalities across the country, its consequent humanitarian realities on women and the fact that Nigeria is a significant troop contributing country to UN peace keeping missions around the globe makes it imperative to prioritize budgeting with a gender perspective.

**Making the 5Ps a Priority** The stakeholders adopted the 5Ps namely, prevention, participation, protection, promotion and prosecution and identified templates as the body of the framework for the adoption of a National Action Plan (NAP) for Nigeria. They also discussed the various elements of the 5Ps as follows:

**PREVENTION** Reinforce preventive performance i.e. strengthen women's roles/contribution in conflict resolution Promote the culture of peace Strengthening early warning and early response mechanisms. Conduct research and documentation of lessons learnt and best practices Identify and support the reforms of enactment of gender responsive laws and policies.

**PARTICIPATION** Train women and girls as mediators, negotiators and conciliators in conflicts and post conflict situations. Take special measures to ensure the participation of women at all levels of peace process. Involvement of men and youths in the dissemination and enlightenment of the NAP. Take Measures to ensure increased participation of women in peace keeping missions and in the security sectors.

**PROTECTION** Strengthen women and girls' capacity to resist sexual and gender based violence during and after conflicts. Empower women and girls in conflict and post situation. Ensure socio-economic empowerment of women and girls in post

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conflict reconstruction and integration. Provision of adequate and accessible humanitarian services.

### PROMOTION

- Undertake massive enlightenment programs to increase awareness creation on the provision of 1325, 1889 and 1820.
- Intensify advocacy against traditional and cultural practices that
- inhibit or obstruct the effective implementation of 1325
- Facilitate the engagement among government, civil society organizations and the media in the promotion of international, regional and national instrument on women, peace and security. •Create adequate funding to ensure effective implementation of
- 1325 Resolution in Nigeria.

**PROSECUTION** Establish special courts to try violators of women and girls during and after conflicts. Initiate a process of collaboration between the police and social workers in the prosecution of gender based violence Develop a robust transitional justice program in Nigeria.

### **Funding**

The obligation of implementing the National Action Plan (NAP) rests on Government through its various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) with the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (OSGF) coordinating a consortium of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 NAP implementing MDAs. Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social

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Development (FMW&SD), Ministry of Defence (MOD), Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (OSGF), NRC, IPCR, NEMA and NHRC are noted as focal point for financing this project based on their mandates and roles in relation to the various aspects of the NAP Pillars. In its annual budgeting, the Nigerian government would adopt a Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB), an effective analytical tool for participatory and transparent process and fair expenditure in advancing gender equality. Gender budget analyses examines any form of public expenditure or method of raising revenue, link national policies and their outcomes to the gendered distribution, use and generation of public resources and can highlight gaps between reaching policy goals and the resources committed for their implementation. It also focuses on mainstreaming gender in the budgeting process and identifying the resources contributing to gender equality/equity in each sector. GRB in effect, looks at biases that can arise because a person is male or female, but at the same time considers the disadvantage suffered as a result of ethnicity, caste, class or poverty status and location.

### **Methods of fund sourcing include:**

Statutory budgetary allocations and deductions

Taxation

Donations

Funding and Partnership

Technical support

Project funding

### **Analysis of fund generation**

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State governments-Contribution of 5% from every state government's security vote

NEMA-5% of its Consolidated Funds

Other MDAs -Statutory budget dedicated to Gender Unit projects

Revenue generating agencies e.g. NNPC, NPA, FIRS-1% annually contributed from revenue

Line Ministries –1% deducted through the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation

Financial Institutions-To donate to the Fund through fund raising drive

The Organized Private Sector (OPS) -productive and extractive industries-To donate through fund raising drive

## **Multinational Corporations**

MNCs-Mainly Oil companies, telecommunications, automobile, Maritime and aviation companies abound in the country engaging in profitable ventures. All are bound by labour law to fulfill corporate responsibilities by committing a portion of their profits to the environment which they operate in through direct project provisions and taxations. However, the reality of a negative impact of insecurity on their ability to maximally produce and profit is considered a mobilizing factor to their participating in the implementation of the NAP4

## **Annual Fund raising**

A fund raising programme would be done annually for the Peace and Security Fund, anchored by the Ministry of Women Affairs in partnership with relevant implementing MDAs, facilitated by donor agencies and CSOs.

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Official Development Assistance- Department For International Development (ODA-DFID), Nigerian Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), USAID, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), OXFAM, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Private Foundations, etc. To be approached for project/programme financing including trainings and empowerment schemes

UN Entities –UN Women, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, etc. Tasked with the responsibility to ensure the actualization of all UN goals through UN guidelines and sponsorships, they would be consulted and required to be committed to their obligations to Nigeria

### **Multilateral contributions –ECOWAS, AU, African Capacity Building Foundation ACBF, foreign missions**

Nigeria's commitment to peace and security in the ECOWAS sub-region is seen in her unflinching huge financial obligation to both the organization and component member countries. Nigeria expects to draw from the benefit of belonging to such an association, specifically from the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre and the PAPS Commission, to finance specific aspects of the 5 NAP pillars that she is focusing on.

### **Civil Society Organizations**

Civil Society organizations-NGOs, CBOs, FBOs and professional bodies are usually 'foot soldiers', sensitizing government and the general public on issues and gaps noticed in programme/project implementations through strong advocacies. Both

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local and international NGOs source finances from donor agencies, many of which have been sourced on account of advocacy on Women, Peace and Security. Their roles are crucial in the monitoring and evaluation of the UNSCR NAP implementation based on measurable indicators.

### **On Nigeria's action plan and timeline for implementation of the CEDAW**

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (**CEDAW**) reviewed the implementation record of Nigeria under the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (**Convention**), in July 2017. To inform such review, WILPF Nigeria, in coalition with seven women's rights organizations (Arike, 2017) submitted a report highlighting the gaps in the implementation of the Convention in Nigeria, with specific attention to Women, Peace and Security issues. This comprehensive joint report formulates recommendations on five themes: conflict prevention, discrimination and gender-based violence, women's space in political and public life, the situation of rural women and the education of women and girls.

Isi Ikhimiukor and Dorothy Njemanze of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Nigeria participated in the CEDAW Committee session, including in the Committee's Informal Meeting with NGOs and the Informal Lunch Briefing with Committee members. On these occasions, they presented the coalition's concerns and recommendations to the Committee members, many of which were reflected in the Committee's questions to the Nigerian Delegation during the Interactive Dialogue.

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The Committee, for instance, enquired about the implementation of the second National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 across all States of Nigeria; how Nigeria intended to monitor and halt the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; and Nigeria's plans to deal with the violent clashes and deadly attacks arising from the competition for natural resources between farmers and Fulani herders in many areas of the country, which have had a dramatic impact on the lives and security of girls and women.

In its Concluding Observations, which formulate recommendations for action to Nigeria, the Committee has tackled a number of concerns raised by WILPF Nigeria and its coalition partners. For instance, on the issue of **conflict prevention**, the Committee recommended to Nigeria to ensure the effective regulation of small arms and light weapons, to allocate an adequate budget to the implementation of the NAP on 1325, to ensure the participation of women in conflict prevention, as well as to protect women and girls that are disproportionately affected by the attacks carried out by the Fulani herdsmen. Such protection should *“ensure that perpetrators of such attacks, including gender-based violence, are arrested, prosecuted and punished with appropriate sanctions”*. (CEDAW, 2017)

Regarding **discrimination and gender-based violence**, the Committee called on Nigeria to domesticate the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act, Child Rights Act, and the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Convention in all States; to expedite the adoption of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill; and to address the root causes of trafficking of women and girls, including by addressing their economic situation. The Committee also

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made specific recommendations on the issue of women's inheritance rights and on child marriage; and on access to legal support and safe shelters for women survivors of violence. These issues also respond to concerns raised by the Coalition.

In the area of **women in political and public life**, the Committee recommended Nigeria to use the on-going constitutional review to adopt legislation on temporary special measures in order to increase the participation of women in political and public life, education and employment; to provide adequate resources to the national machinery for the advancement of women; and to intensify awareness-raising in the media and film industry about discriminatory gender stereotypes.

Regarding the rights of **rural women**, the Committee recommended that Nigeria review land laws in order to ensure rural women's access to land and to expand rural women's access to credit and economic opportunities. Finally, on the issue of **education**, the Committee called on Nigeria to increase the budget allocation for the education sector.

In November 2016, WILPF Nigeria participated in the CEDAW Committee's Pre-sessional Working Group. During that meeting, WILPF delivered a statement underlining a number of concerns to raise with the Nigerian government. These concerns were reflected in the Committee's .

In particular, the Committee asked Nigeria for further information on its implementation of the National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the application of the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act outside the Federal capital territory, steps taken to address the under-representation of

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WILPF Nigeria and its coalition partners will monitor the implementation of the CEDAW Committee's recommendations at national level to ensure progress in the protection of women's rights on the ground.

For more information about the issues raised by WILPF Nigeria and its coalition partners in this CEDAW Committee's review, please read joint report on Women, Peace and Security.

### **On Nigeria's National human rights institution.**

The idea of human rights is that there are certain rights attached to the individual which should not be taken away from him except in circumstances considered

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reasonable and allowed by law. Human rights are those rights which the international community recognizes as belonging to all individuals by the very fact of their humanity. These rights combined with traditional legal system seek to protect the essential rights of its subject (Umuzurike, 1995). The most banal statement on the concept of human rights is that it is the modern name for what have been traditionally known as natural rights. These rights may be defined as moral rights which every human being everywhere at all times ought to have simply because of the fact that, in contradistinction with other being, he is rational and moral (Ezejiolor, 1999). The fountainhead of natural rights is the concept of natural law. According to the Greek and Roman philosophers of the Stoic school, who first formulated it, natural law was universal because it applied, not only to citizens of certain states but rather to everybody everywhere in the metropolis (Ibid).

### **National Human Rights Commission**

The National Human Rights Commission was established by the National Human Rights Commission Act, 1995 (CAP, 1995) in line with the resolution of the United Nations which enjoins all member states to establish Human Rights Institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. The commission serves as a mechanism to enhance the enjoyment of human rights. Its establishment aims at creating an enabling environment for extra-judicial recognition, promotion and enforcement of human rights, treaty obligations and providing a forum for public

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enlightenment and dialogue on human rights issues thereby limiting controversy and confrontation. Mandate of the Commission The mandate of the commission is to carry out the following:

- a. Deal with all matters relating to the protection of human rights as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, African Charter, the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other international treaties on human rights to which Nigeria is a party;
- b. Monitor and investigate all alleged cases of human rights violation in Nigeria and make appropriate recommendations to the Federal Government for the prosecution and such other actions as it may deem expedient in each circumstance;
- c. Assist victims of human rights violation and seek appropriate redress and remedies on their behalf;
- d. Undertake studies on all matters relating to human rights and assist the Federal Government in the formulation of appropriate policies on the guarantee of human rights;
- e. Publish regularly reports on the state of human rights protection in Nigeria;
- f. Organize local and international seminars, workshops and conferences on human rights issues for public enlightenment;
- g. Liaise and cooperate with local and international organizations on human rights for the purpose of advancing the promotion and protection of human rights;
- h. Participate in all international activities relating to the promotion and protection of human rights;

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- i. Maintain a library, collect data and disseminate information and materials on human rights generally; and
- j. Carry out all such other functions as are necessary or expedient for the performance of these functions under the Act.<sup>16</sup>

To carry out the above functions, the Commission has a Governing Council which consists of 16 members made up of a chairman who shall be a retired Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria or the Court of Appeal or a retired Judge of the High Court of a State and an Executive Secretary.<sup>17</sup> The members of the Council are appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Attorney – General of the Federation.<sup>18</sup>

### **Activities of the Commission**

Since inception, the Commission has carried out activities in various fields in line with the law establishing it and the mandate. The Commission as the highest National Institution dealing with human rights has presented a common front on human rights and put in place adequate mechanisms for the effective promotion and protection of human rights in Nigeria. This it has done through public enlightenment and education, investigation of complaints, mediation and reconciliation, conflict resolution, peace building, research advocacy and training programmes on contemporary issues in the field of human rights. Through a consultative and collaborative process the commission has developed a National Action Plan for the promotion and protection of human rights in Nigeria. The National Action Plan includes effective complaint mechanism, regular hosting of enlightenment seminars, workshops, rallies and continuous reengineering of its

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strategies. It is expected to be a benchmark on which Nigeria's human rights records can be judged. For effective performance and result oriented approach to its work, the Council identified fifteen (15) main thematic areas of focus on the National Human Rights Commission and these include:

1. Women and other Gender Related Matters;
2. Children
3. Corruption and Good Governance;
4. Police, Prisons and other Detention Centres;
5. Environment and the Niger – Delta;
6. Education
7. Freedom of Religion and Belief
8. Torture, Extra-Judicial, Summary and Arbitrary Executions
9. Law Reform and Law Review
10. Independence of the Judiciary and Access to Justice
11. Labour
12. Food and Shelter
13. Communal Conflicts and other Related Violence;
14. Health
15. Freedom of Expression and the Media<sup>19</sup>.

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**On Actions Nigeria has taken in the last five years to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda**

The Federal Government of Nigeria approved the second National Action Plan for the implementation of the UNSC Resolution 1325, the NAP recognizes the under representation of women in peace processes, the disproportionate impact of violence on women in conflict situations. The second National Action Plan is aimed at tackling some of the gaps observed in the previous NAP which was launched with the support of the NSRP in 2013. The second Nap addressed issues such as violent extremism, insurgency, transnational border crimes, inclusion of women in the national peace architecture, violence against women amongst other important issues.

The NAP has been adopted by more than half of Nigerian states and is experiencing an improved rate of implementation.

The Nigerian President in 2018 appointed a new Senior Special Assistant to the President (SSA) on SDGs in the person of Mrs. Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire. Her office is responsible for ensuring horizontal and vertical coherence between development policies, plans and strategies. Similarly, an Inter-Ministerial Committee on the SDGs has been established and operational guidelines for the same developed to guide the coordinated engagement with Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). Similar structures are also being established at the state level across the country.

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To fully harness available resources and ideas, and effectively engage other stakeholders, a Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG) and a Donors' Forum on the SDGs have recently been inaugurated. The CSOs Group on SDGs are already working towards some SDGs targets, with giant stride on inclusive education, in collaboration with the Joint Association of Persons with Disability (JONAPWD) and Women 2030 in Nigeria.

To enhance the legislative and oversight roles of Parliamentarians on SDGs implementation process, two select committees on SDGs have been established in the Senate and House of Representatives.

As part of the national SDGs advocacy and campaign programme, the OSSAP-SDGs has entered into partnership with the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to train graduating youths to become SDGs champions in their local communities and areas of national service they are deployed upon graduation.

Existence of good policy and planning framework: The recently-launched Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), on which the current medium- and short- terms budgeting frameworks are based is, to a large extent, aligned to the SDGs. Similarly, many of the current State Development Plans (SDPs), including the Benue, Taraba, Yobe, Kaduna, Ebonyi, Kano, Jigawa, Anambra, Delta, to mention but a few, are aligned to the SDGs. The alignment aid planning, monitoring and evaluation of SDG implementation, an SDGs data mapping exercise has been concluded and a data supply responsibility framework agreed upon.

Up-scaling the Conditional Grants Scheme (CGS): The CGS, a counterpart contributory mechanism which incentivizes sub-national governments to mobilize

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resources to accelerate progress in SDGs core areas and is acclaimed as a best practice in implementing the global development agenda is currently being up scaled.

Identifying and targeting the poor and vulnerable people: This has been achieved through establishment of a "National Social Register" for poor and vulnerable households. There is a monthly conditional cash transfer of five thousand naira (N5,000) to such households as part of a national social safety net programme.

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**On actions taken by Nigeria in the last five years to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peace building, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings**

The surge in women's political participation led to incremental proportions of women in elective positions particularly between 1999 and 2007. In the 2007 elections about 1200 women entered the contest, 660 won the primaries while 99 emerged winners at the state and federal levels (Country Gender Report, 2012). Out of these winners 6 were state deputy governors, 9 senators, 27 were elected to the House of Representatives and 57 won the State House of Assembly seats. At the local council level 27 women emerged local government council chairpersons and another 235 as councilors.

In 2011, the surge in women's 'participation' continued to increase but there was a drop in the numbers of women who won elections (especially to parliamentary seats), at state and national levels respectively. The total number of male and female aspirants was 3306, with 3004(90%) male and 302 (9.1%) female candidates. Out of this number, 7 women (out of 360 elected members) emerged winners in the Senate and 19 (out of 109 elected members) out won seats in the House of Representatives. This indicates that during the 2011 elections, women lost some of the earlier gains recorded between 1999 and 2007. As shown in Table 1 below, the number of women who won elections as state deputy governors also dropped from 6 (out of 35) in 2007 to 3 (out of 35) in 2011. The underrepresentation of women in elected positions is caused by a number of

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factors including weak internal democracy within political parties; and the absence of affirmative action measures in electoral processes particularly within political parties. In order to address this, there is ongoing advocacy by civil society and the national gender machinery at the level of party leadership. Legislative advocacy to entrench affirmative action in the Constitution is also ongoing.

### **On actions Nigeria has taken in the last five years to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?**

The ongoing conflict in north-east Nigeria is characterized by widespread attacks against civilians, including sexual violence, the abduction of women and girls for sexual slavery, disappearances and forced displacement, all of which are primarily attributed to Boko Haram. The abduction of women and girls by non-State armed groups for use as sex slaves and/or carriers of person-borne improvised explosive devices is a disturbing feature of the ongoing conflict. Ostracization from the community hampers the reintegration of returnees, which leads to further exclusion from social protection and assistance. Those negative effects are compounded for mothers of children born from rape.

In February 2018, the United Nations documented the kidnapping of 110 school girls in a secondary school in north-east Nigeria, who were subjected by members of Boko Haram to forced marriage, rape and physical and emotional violence. On 21 March, Boko Haram released 107 of the girls. The armed group announced that

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one girl who had refused to convert to Islam would be kept as a slave. The United S/2019/280 26/35 19-04552 Nations provided medical and psychosocial rehabilitation for the released girls, with counseling for their family members. Another five girls were raped by military officers. One survivor was killed upon the perpetrators learning that she had filed a complaint. Four survivors received medical attention, but declined legal support. However, service provision is generally limited by the lack of access to affected populations. The military leadership in those locations informed service providers that they would ensure the accountability of their officers. Women and girls account for 99 per cent of the victims of reported incidents of sexual violence across Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States. Approximately 38 per cent of the incidents of sexual violence reported were perpetrated in the context of trafficking, forced conscription, abduction, kidnapping or other forms of detention.

In October 2017, Nigerian authorities began trials of Boko Haram suspects, with subsequent rounds in February and July 2018 at Wawa Cantonment, in Kainji, Niger State. In the third round of trials, which commenced in July 2018, over 200 defendants, including three women, were tried under the Terrorism (Prevention) (Amendment) Act, 2013. The courts convicted 113 defendants, acquitted 5, and discharged 97 without trial. None of the accused were charged with sexual violence. The outcome is of great concern, as sexual violence plays a dominant role in Boko Haram operations and strategies. In 2018, the national human rights commission in Nigeria constituted a special investigations panel on alleged human rights violations in north-east Nigeria and invited public submissions of allegations

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of human rights violations committed in north-east Nigeria, including allegations concerning sexual violence against internally displaced persons, the lack of investigations, the sexual exploitation of women and girls in exchange for food and security, and the discrimination and violence against women and girls returning from Boko Haram captivity (pejoratively called “Boko Haram wives”). It is also of great concern that the findings of the Presidential Panel to Review Compliance of the Armed Forces with Human Rights Obligations and Rules of Engagement, established in August 2017, are not yet public.

The United Nations continues to support 278,194 people, primarily women and girls, who require medical and psychosocial services. Women and girls have also benefited from livelihood support and dignity kits. In addition, 18 new women-friendly safe spaces were established in areas newly liberated from Boko Haram, enabling women to build social networks, acquire vocational skills and secure referral to pursue care and redress. 200 girls formerly associated with non-State armed groups and forcibly married to Boko Haram insurgents were released by the military to the Borno State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. They received rehabilitative care and reintegration support. Finally, the United Nations is finalizing two handbooks on counter-terrorism investigations and on gender dimensions of criminal justice responses to terrorism, specific to Nigeria. Nigeria’s constitution prohibits unlawful killings. The authorities are yet to amend Force Order 237 which provides for much wider scope for the use of lethal force than is permissible under international law and standards and is often used to justify shootings by police officers.<sup>14</sup> Amnesty International continues to

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document unlawful killings and extrajudicial executions, including in the context of the armed conflict in the northeast and law enforcement operations conducted by the military in other parts of the country. The government's decision to deploy the military to control internal public order situations has seriously undermined the role of the police and has led to unnecessary loss of lives. In the southeast, the military has been deployed since 2015 to respond to a series of protests, marches and gatherings by members and supporters of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) who are seeking the creation of a Biafran state. Between August 2015 and October 2016, the security forces killed more than 150 IPOB members and supporters during non-violent gatherings. Amnesty International documented 11 such incidents, including in May 2016 when at least 60 people were killed when the security forces opened fire on IPOB supporters in several locations in the southeast.<sup>15</sup> In September 2017, soldiers killed at least 12 IPOB supporters in Umuahia, Abia state.<sup>16</sup> In 2017, the federal government banned IPOB. In Zaria, Kaduna state, soldiers killed more than 350 supporters of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), between 12 and 14 December 2015. The IMN supporters had blocked a section of the road in front of the IMN headquarters and refused to let a military convoy to pass. The state authorities later admitted to a judicial Commission of inquiry that they had buried 347 bodies in a mass grave two days after the massacre.<sup>17</sup> The Commission recommended that the members of the military suspected of unlawful killings should be prosecuted,<sup>18</sup> however, the Kaduna state government's white paper rejected most of its recommendations.<sup>19</sup> The leader of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN),

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Ibrahim El-Zakzaky, and his wife remain in incommunicado detention without trial since their arrest in December 2015 despite a court ordering their release and compensation. In 2016, the Kaduna state government banned the IMN. The police and the military routinely and systematically torture women, men and children, using a range of methods including beatings, shootings and rape. Officials from the State Security Service carry out arbitrary detentions, keeping detainees incommunicado, conducting flawed investigations, torturing or otherwise ill-treating those in their custody, and frequently ignore court orders for the release of detainees.<sup>20</sup> Allegations of torture against the Special Anti-Robbery Squad officers are often not investigated and in some cases suspects are transferred to another location to avoid punishment. In 2015 and 2016, tens of thousands of IDPs arrived in the towns liberated from Boko Haram by the military. The military established “satellite camps” to host the IDPs under armed guard by the military and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). The vast majority of IDPs in these camps were women, elderly people and children. Amnesty International has received scores of reports of women and girls in the camps being raped and sexually exploited by military officers and members of the CJTF, often in exchange for food and other necessities.<sup>32</sup> In some camps, including Bama Hospital camp, women have described semi-organized systems of sexual exploitation, where they were collected by CJTF members and taken to their quarters for sex. Amnesty International has also documented several cases where police officers have subjected female detainees to sexual violence either to extract a “confession” or as punishment. Victims have described how they were raped, verbally abused and

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sexually assaulted. One woman told Amnesty International that a police officer sprayed tear gas into her vagina to coerce her to confess to involvement in an armed robbery.

The prevalence of sexual violence within the Boko Haram crisis has been widely reported in humanitarian assessments, human rights reports and media coverage from the early days of the insurgency. Boko Haram's abuses against women and girls, including abduction, forced conversion to Islam, physical and psychological abuse, forced labour, forced participation in insurgency operations and forced marriage, rape, and other sexual abuse have inspired fear among local communities in north-east Nigeria and contributed to the group's notoriety, both within the region and globally. However, while Boko Haram's violence against women and girls has been at the centre of public attention to the crisis, delivering protection and support for women and girls has been an ongoing challenge in the humanitarian response.

In January 2016, three UN Special Rapporteurs visited Maiduguri in Borno State on behalf of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). There they found evidence of widespread sexual abuse and other major protection concerns affecting internally displaced women and girls. They concluded that 'a protection gap is evident, especially in service delivery and access to justice' for women and girls victims of Boko Haram'.+ This was not the first report of a protection deficit in the humanitarian response, nor the first report of sexual exploitation and abuse of displaced women and girls, but it was the first time that UN officials had pinpointed the coalescence of Boko Haram violence and sexual

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exploitation and abuse in displacement to create extreme vulnerability among displaced women and girls. In April 2016, an assessment report identified gender-based violence as a feature of displacement in the north-east Nigeria crisis, and identified a lack of prioritization of gender-based violence programming by the humanitarian community in Nigeria.

The prevalence of sexual abuse and exploitation of women and girls by civilian militias, members of the military and the national and state governments' emergency management cadres has also been highlighted, including in a report by the UN Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of IDPs following a visit to Maiduguri in August 2016.+ In October 2016, a Human Rights Watch report of sexual exploitation and abuse among IDP women and girls by camp officials led to the establishment of a committee to investigate allegations of trafficking and sexual abuse of IDPs. These reports and others have increased the profile of the unmet needs of vulnerable women and girls in north-east Nigeria, but the challenges experienced by the humanitarian response in providing prevention activities and support and services for survivors have continued. Ongoing attention from government and UN officials, humanitarian agencies and donors is essential to overcome the obstacles to reaching women and girls across the conflict. The structures of exploitation and abuse that have impeded government and humanitarian agencies from responding to the needs of women and girls in the humanitarian response must be addressed in order for resilience, recovery and peace-building activities to be successful, and in pursuit of durable solutions for displaced communities.

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**On actions taken by Nigeria in the last five years to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child**

**In order to ensure continued protection for the girl child, Nigeria passed the Child Rights Act into law at Federal level in 2003. This has been followed by the passage of this law in 24 out of the 36 states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).**

The Act comprises 24 parts and 278 sections including provisions to address the rights and responsibilities of the child, the responsibilities of parents and guardians, the provision of care to particularly vulnerable children and the steps for legal remediation where these rights have been violated.

Some of the provisions of the Act which address the girl child in particular include section (right to freedom from discrimination); section 15 (right to free, compulsory and universal primary education) and section 16 (rights of a child in need of special protection measures). Of particular relevance to the advancement of the girl child, is Section 21, which deals with the prohibition of child marriage. This section provides that : *'No person under the age of 18 years is capable of contracting a valid marriage, and accordingly a marriage so contracted is null and void and of no effect whatsoever.'*

Section 22 deals with the Prohibition of child betrothal. It provides as follows:

- (1) No parent, guardian or any other person shall betroth a child to any person.
- (2) A betrothal in contravention of subsection (1) of this section is null and void.

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In section 23, the Punishment for child marriage and betrothal are outlined. This section provides that:

A person-

- (a) who marries a child; or
- (b) to whom a child is betrothed; or
- (c) who promotes the marriage of a child; or
- (d) who betroths a child,

commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of N500, 000; or imprisonment for a term of five years or to both such fine and imprisonment.

The Child Rights Act has provided an effective, overarching institutional framework for ensuring the advancement of the girl child in Nigeria. Ongoing efforts need to focus on its implementation and monitoring.

### **On actions taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies**

Climate change is one of the most urgent issues that Nigeria tries to deal with, with widespread implications for the earth's ecosystems and human development across sectors. From the exacerbation of poverty, to the breakdown of infrastructure, to the loss of environmental, political, economic and social security, the impacts of climate change are extensive.

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The impacts of climate change, whether they are gradual changes on natural resources and agriculture or more cataclysmic events like flood, are felt differently by women and men. For instance in Nigeria, some wells are drying up, forcing women and children to travel further to collect water and firewood. Women's strategies for adapting to water insecurity include harvesting rainwater and purchasing water from vendors. (*Celebrating Momentum and Milestones: A WEDO History of Women's Organizing Toward a Healthy and Peaceful Planet.*). As has been noted elsewhere in this report, Nigerian women also do most of the agricultural work, and are therefore affected by weather-related natural disasters impacting on food, energy and water. Also increased climate variability appears to be contributing to the pace and intensity of the feminization of agriculture, because one of the consequences of climate variability one observes is the out migration of most of the able bodied male members. This has implications on food productivity, land use policies, extension approaches, farm investments, our approach to farm mechanization (WEP, Gender Knowledge and Climate Change in Northern Nigeria; report 2010).

Women in many contexts in Nigeria are disproportionately affected by natural disasters and extreme weather events, such as floods, droughts, and mudslides. Women are also under-represented in decision making at the household, community and societal level, including policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The issue of climate refugees has been discussed at various levels but empirical data on its nature, social and gender impacts, is perhaps inadequate. One of the areas, currently under discussion within the

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Nigerian context is the need to generate a country specific gender data base on the environment and sustainable development. This is critical as it will enable an improved understanding how societal expectations, roles, status, and the economic power of women and men affect, and are affected differently by climate change. It will also help inform actions taken to reduce vulnerability and combat climate change in the Country.

As part of the Growing Girls and Women in Nigeria (GWiN) initiative, The Federal Ministry of Water Resources, working with its civil society partner, Women Environment Programme (WEP) is working to provide capacity to women in the area of water management and also the provision of water and sanitation facilities in public places as well as improving the hygienic condition of the rural populations. WEP has since 2014 trained rural women and girls in four project pilot states of Abia, Bauchi, Plateau and Osun on Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), Leadership and Conflict Resolution, Slab Construction and Facility Maintenance. Over 40 women and girls in each state were trained on CLTS, slab construction and facility maintenance and over 20 were trained on leadership and conflict resolution.

Also in a bid to discover and provide clean energy options for Nigeria's rural women, the Federal Ministry of Environment, working with WEP has established the Rural Women Energy Security (RUWES) programme which aims at lowering market entry barriers of the clean energy market at every step, from the design of clean energy products, to building a lasting market for reliable, practical and affordable clean energy technologies. The RUWES programme aims to empower

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women economically by making them marketers and distributors of clean energy products.

## **On actions taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation**

Women in many contexts in Nigeria are disproportionately affected by natural disasters and extreme weather events, such as floods, droughts, and mudslides. Women are also under-represented in decision making at the household, community and societal level, including policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The issue of climate refugees has been discussed at various levels but empirical data on its nature, social and gender impacts, is perhaps inadequate. One of the areas, currently under discussion within the Nigerian context is the need to generate a country specific gender data base on the environment and sustainable development. This is critical as it will enable an improved understanding how societal expectations, roles, status, and the economic power of women and men affect, and are affected differently by climate change. It will also help inform actions taken to reduce vulnerability and combat climate change in the Country. The Platform for Action recognizes that women face barriers to full equality and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability, because they are indigenous women or because of other status. Many women encounter specific obstacles related to their family status, particularly as single parents; and to their

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socio-economic status, including their living conditions in rural, isolated or impoverished areas. Additional barriers also exist for refugee women, other displaced women, including internally displaced women as well as for immigrant women and migrant women, including women migrant workers. Many women are also particularly affected by environmental disasters, serious and infectious diseases and various forms of violence against women.

### **ON Nigeria's current national machinery for gender equity and the empowerment of women**

This Strategic Development Results Framework, designed for implementing the Nigeria National Gender Policy is the product of an intensive consultative process and hard work by several individuals and institutions. The process lasted for 8 months, after the approval of the National Gender Policy by the Federal Executive Council in 2006. The development of the Strategic Results Development Framework commenced in January 2008 with a series of consultations that culminated into a survey exercise which assessed the level of preparedness of the government institutions for implementing the gender Policy as well as to identify gaps in programming around gender issues.

The Federal Government of Nigeria, under the leadership of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, has developed this Strategic Results

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Framework that enables it to successfully implement the core principles of the National Gender Policy.

### **On Nigeria's line of accountability for the national machinery for gender equity**

Monitoring and Accountability including implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Platform for Action and reporting on national efforts to comply with international commitments on gender equality; coordination and collaboration; and, social mobilization and provision of direct services to people.

### **On the CEDAW implementation annual report to the cabinet and parliament**

The machinery presented an annual white paper on gender equality to parliament describing progress. This information was made accessible to the citizens through websites. In some countries, the national machineries sent monitoring missions to ministries/ agencies/ cities/ provinces to assess progress and submitted reports to the chief executive.

Are those reports accessible to the public?

Many Member States noted national campaigns to raise public awareness about gender equality and women's empowerment. Use of mass media was an important strategy in this regard. Increasingly, national machineries used websites to provide information and to engage in dialogue with civil society. Nation-wide dialogue with community-based organizations and civil society was another strategy pursued in several countries to involve citizens and raise public awareness.

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**On the head of the national machinery and the institutional process for SDG implementation e.g. inter-ministerial coordinator office, commission or committees in Nigeria.**

Making gender analysis an integral part of all policy articulation, implementation and evaluation undertaken by not only by Government at all tiers and within all arms, but also by all stakeholders. All stakeholders, including government, the private sector, civil society organisations, and community based organisations, development partners, and individual women and men have a role to play in the achievement of gender equity and equality. Transformation of the policy environment within which gender equity programmes are to be implemented, supported by resources, financial and technical, demonstrating political will.

**On the formal mechanisms in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, CEDAW and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development**

The following groups are formally involved and recognized as key stakeholders in the implementation of CEDAW in Nigeria:

Civil society organizations

Women's right org.

Academia and think tanks

Faith-based org.

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Parliaments/parliamentary committees

Private sector

United Nations System

Others are civil society organizations, Women's Right Organization, Private Sector and Parliaments/parliamentary committees. These stakeholders contribute immensely in the national coordination mechanism that see to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration, CEDAW and platform for Action and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development in Nigeria.

**On mechanisms in place to ensure that women and girls from marginalized groups and all gender can participate and that their concerns are reflected in these processes**

The National Assembly is advocating a series of positive measures to strengthen institutional mechanisms – such as framework laws, governmental programmes, national action plans and the setting up of gender equality committees in elected assemblies – in order to make up for lost time in this field. It stresses that political parties have a responsibility to promote women's access to decision-making positions and that the media have a role to play in informing public opinion about the place of women in society.

The Nigerian National Assembly has the responsibility to call on other African Union member states to introduce institutional mechanisms guaranteeing women's participation in the decision-making process, ensure such mechanisms are implemented in practice, set the objective of achieving a minimum 40%

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representation of women on decision-making bodies, particularly within elected assemblies, and promote women's participation in all sectors of social and economic life.

The Assembly should also recommend that the African Union pursue the implementation on balanced participation by women and men in political and public decision-making, draw up at the earliest opportunity the "Charter for Electoral Equality", ensure women's participation in decision-making bodies and appoint an ombudsperson responsible for implementing the principle of equality between women and men in the Council of Europe member states.

### **On the contribution of stakeholders to the preparation of the present national report.**

Various stakeholders, especially NGOs, Women Right Organization and Civil Society Organization have been of such tremendous input in the preparation of the present national report in that various review has been done by these organizations in other to have a comprehensive report as regarding the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **On gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls' inclusion as a key priority in the national plan/strategy for SDG implementation**

Gender equality and women and girls' empowerment has become one of the key objective of the national plan/strategy for SDG implementation. Gender equality has been a major advocacy of government in relation to decision making and

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empowering women and girls to be part of different institution and body of government.

### **On priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years**

Conduct new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)

A need for new survey to produce national base line information is a necessity for any country that really want a sustainable result in regarding to gender statistics.

Engaging in new survey will help in innovative thinking as regarding the values or variables that are provided and also will help to keep track of the achievement or failure of the Programme.

Production of knowledge products on gender statistics (e.g user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers)

The need for production of knowledge products on gender statistics is of serious importance in other to strengthened the gender statistics for the next five years.

User friendly reports, policy briefs and research papers will go a long way to refresh and keep the information in mind. Carrying out a great deal of research on the gender related issues will keep people abreast of the need for gender equality in the society.

### **Nigeria's defined national indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs**

There are One Hundred and Twenty-Eight (128) indicators

Gender Specific – Thirty-Seven (37) of these indicators are gender specific.

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Additional Country Indicator (gender specific) that are part of Global Indicator

## **On data collection and compilation on SDG 5 indicators and on gender-specific indicators under other SDGs**

Data Collection has been prioritized in recent years, SDGs 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”

The indicator that has been prioritized is the “Proportion of girls aged 15 to 19 who have undergone female genital mutilation”.

## **On the disaggregation routinely provided by major surveys in Nigeria**

Income, Education and Gender are on the top list of the disaggregation that are routinely surveyed in Nigeria. The income has to do with the Gross Domestic Product of the country which equally determines so many thing as regarding to the country. Education is also of key interest to the government thereby making a very important sector in the country that government tends to beam its search light on it. Gender also plays an important role helping the government to determine how to involve women and bring balance to the gender inequality that is rampant in many institutions in the country.

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Feminization of Poverty in Nigerian Cities: Insights from Focus Group Discussions and Participatory Poverty Assessment

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BOI	Bank of Industry
BPFA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
BUDFOW	Business Development Fund for Women
CDD	Centre for Democracy and Development
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CGS	Conditional Grants Scheme
CIRDDOC	Civil Resource Development and Documentation Centre
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DFID	Department for International Development
ENGINE	Nigerian Girls in Nigerian Enterprise'
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FCTA	Federal Capital Territory Administration
FMW&SD	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
GAJI	Gender Advocacy for Justice Initiative

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GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GWIn	Growing Girls and Women in Nigeria
IMN	Islamic Movement of Nigeria
IPCR	Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MWASD	The Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development
NAP	National Action Plan
NASSP	National Social Safety Net Programme
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NHRC	National Human Rights' Commission
NIS	National Immigration Service
NPF	Nigerian Police Force
NRC	Nigerian Railway Cooperation
OSGF	Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VAP	Violence Against Persons
VVF	Vesico Vaginal Fistula
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WOFEE	Women Fund for Economic Empowerment
WORDOC	Women's Research and Documentation Centre,
CBN	Central Bank of Nigeria
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency

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DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DGD	Democratic Governance for Development
WACOL	Women's Aid Collective
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FMF	Federal Ministry of Finance
FMOWASD	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
FMOWASD	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
FMWASD	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GBVIMS	Gender Based Violence Information Management Systems
GBVSWG	Gender Based Violence Sub Working Group
GPI	Girls' Power Initiative
GWIn	Growing Women and Girls Initiative'
ICT	Information and communication technologies
INEC	Independent National & Electoral Commission
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization on Migration
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LACA	Local agencies for the control of AIDS
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries, Department and Agencies
MEDIACON	Media Concern Initiatives

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NACA	National Agency for the Control of AIDS
NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons
NSIP	National Social Investments Programme
NAWOJ	Nigeria Association of Women Journalists
NEEDS	National Economic & Employment and Development Strategy
NGEI	Nigerian Girls' Education Initiative
NSRP	Nigerian Stability and Reconciliation Programme
ODA-DFID	Official Development Assistance- Department for International Development
OPD	Office of the Public Defender
PMS	Premium Motor Spirit
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PSWG	Protection Sector Working Group
SACAs	State agencies for the control of AIDS
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SEEDS	State Economic & Employment and Development Strategy
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SURE – P	Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Education
UNFPA	United Nations Funds for Population Activity

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UNFPA	United Nations Funds for Population Activity
UNICEF	United Nations International Children & Emergency Funds
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGEI	United Nations Girls Education Initiative
UNICRI	United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WHO	World Health Organisation
WOTCLEF	Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation
WACOL	Women's Aid Collective
YOU WiN	Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria

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