



FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

NATIONAL BEIJING + 30 REVIEW



*Honourable Minister with CSOs 2. Honourable Minister with school children 3. Honourable Minister with NCWS
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**THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF WOMEN AFFAIRS AND SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

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Acronyms

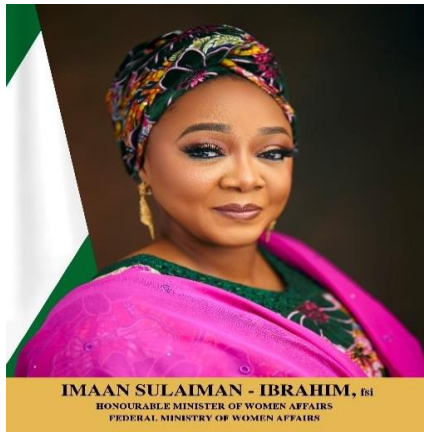
A2F	Access to Financial Services in Nigeria
AECF	Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Agreement
ARC	African Risk Capacity
ARFH	Association for Reproductive and Family Health
AWDF	African Women Development Fund
BHCPF	Basic Health Care Provision Fund
BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
BVN	Bank Verification Number
CBN	Central Bank
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CC TWG	Cross Cutting Technical Working Group
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIPP	Community Initiatives to Promote Peace
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CRA	Child Rights Act
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	Department for International Development
DRM&F	Disaster Risk Management and Financing
dRPC	development Research and Project Centre
DSVA	Domestic and sexual violence agency
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EFInA	Enhancing Financial Innovation and Access
ERGP	Economic Recovery and Growth
ETP	Energy Transmission Act
EU	European Union
EVAW	End Violence Against Women
FBO	Faith-based organizations
FCDO	Foreign and Commonwealth Development Organization
FCIID	Force Criminal Intelligence & Investigation Department
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FMFBNP	Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning
FMWA	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs
FOMWAN	Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria
G2P	Government to Persons
G4G	Girls for Girls
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

GEEP	Government Enterprise and Empowerment Program
GEESI	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
GEP	Girl Education Project
GEWE	Gender Equality And Women Empowerment
GLOHWOC	Global Hope for Women and Children
IAP	Inclusive and Accountable Politics
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPT	Intermittent Preventive Treatment
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
ISDG	Integrated Sustainable Development Goals
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITF	Industrial Training Fund
ITN	Insecticide-treated nets
JWCs	Juvenile Women and Children Units
KOPSEN	Kogi Peace and Security Network
LGA	Local Government Authority
MDA	Ministry, Department and Agency
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro-Small and Medium Enterprises
MWASD	Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
NAP	National Action Plans
NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons
NASS	National Assembly of Nigeria
NAWOJ	National Association of Women Journalists
NBC	National Broadcasting Commission
NBS	Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics
NCPD	National Commission for Persons with Disabilities
NCWD	National Centre for Women Development
NCWS	National Council of Women Societies
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NDE	National Directorate of Employment
NDHS	Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey
NDP	National Development Plan
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NESG	Nigerian Economic Summit Group
NFWP	Nigeria for Women Project
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGP	National Gender Policy
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NILDS	National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies

NiMAGES	Nigeria Men and Gender Equality Survey
NLPS	Nigeria National Longitudinal Phone Survey
NPoPC	Nigeria's population
NSIP	National Social Investment Program
NSS	National Statistical System
OCDI	Olive Community Development Initiative
PDCRC	Public Defenders and Citizens Rights Commission
PLASMEDA	Plateau State Small and Medium Development Agency
POC	Person of Concern
PWAN	Partners West Africa Nigeria
PWD	Persons with disabilities
RECEF	Renaissance Care and Empowerment Foundation
RoLAC	Rule of Law and Anti-corruption
SARC	Sexual Assault and Referral Centres
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDS	Social Development Secretariat
SEMA	State Emergency Management Agency
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SIP	Social Investment Program
SMEDAN	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
SWOFON	Small Scale Women Farmers Organization in Nigeria
TVET	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UKAID	UK Department for International Development
UNDHR	UN Declaration on Human Rights
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
UNTF	United Nations Trust Fund
UNTOC	United Nations Transnational Organized Crime Convention
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAPP	Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WAG	Women Affinity Group
WARD-C	Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre
WCDG	Women's Critical Discussion Groups
WEE	Women Economic Empowerment
WELS	Women Empowerment and Livelihood Support
WEP	Women Environmental Programme
WEWE	Widows and Orphans Empowerment Organization

WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy
WHO	World Health Organization
WIMBIZ	Women in Business
WIPF	Women in Politics Forum
WISCAR	Women in Successful Careers
WISCOD	Women Initiative for Sustainable Community Development
WOTCLEF	Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation
WOWICAN	Women Wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria
WPC	Women Peacebuilding Councils
WPN	Women Peace Network
WPS	Women Peace Security
WPSN	Women Peace and Security Network
WRAPA	Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative
WVL-N	Women's Voice and Leadership in Nigeria
100 WLG	100 Women Lobby Group

Foreword



Thirty years ago, Nigeria joined the global community in Beijing, China, at the Fourth World Conference on Women to reaffirm our commitment to advancing women's rights and achieving gender equality. The Beijing Platform for Action (BFA) adopted in 1995 set a bold vision for women's empowerment across all aspects of life.

The amended 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the BFA have been instrumental in developing strategies and frameworks that address the rights of women and girls in Nigeria.

The emergence of the National Gender Policy (2021 to 2026) and its Strategic Framework, the Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) Policy, the Third National Action Plan of the UNSCR 1325, Nigeria Agenda 2050, National Development Plan 2021-2025, the National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change for Nigeria (2020) and a most befitting physical structure for the National Machinery for the advancement of Women are a testament to the successes recorded.

As we commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Conference, this Beijing+30 Nigeria Report offers a comprehensive reflection on our progress, challenges, and future priorities in fulfilling that vision. I am honoured to present this report, which outlines Nigeria's key achievements, which include the promotion of women's political participation and leadership, with efforts to increase representation in decision-making roles; enhancing educational and economic opportunities for women and girls, aimed at building a foundation for equality and gender justice, addressing gender-based violence and harmful practices, recognizing the urgent need for protection and support, as well as advancing women's health and well-being, particularly in areas of maternal and reproductive health.

Despite these achievements, significant challenges persist, including limited access to education and economic resources for women in rural areas, inadequate healthcare services, especially in regions impacted by conflict, endemic gender-based violence, and persistent societal discrimination amongst others.

To address these gaps, Nigeria remains committed to strengthening institutional frameworks and policies for gender equality and women's empowerment, scaling up investments in girls' education and economic empowerment for women, enacting and enforcing policy and legislative reforms that protect women's rights, including that of the Girl-Child.

The support of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, under the Renewed Hope Agenda, has opened new vistas for mainstreaming women's voices in National Development. We are also thankful to the First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, H.E. Senator Oluremi Tinubu, CON, who through her Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI) has provided livelihood and skills support to countless women and girls in rural Nigeria.

In the same vein, we appreciate the support of the Nigeria Governors Forum and their Spouses in the fight against Gender-Based Violence in the country. The increasing support from my Colleagues, the Honourable Ministers, and the Leadership of other Departments and Agencies whose mandates impact our Ministry has accelerated the progress made in the last few years. The role played by members of the National, Sub-national, and Local Government Parliaments to protect the rights of women and girls in the country is worth mentioning. I place on record the invaluable contributions of the Nigeria Security Architecture in advancing the cause of Women.

I also value the contributions of Traditional institutions, Faith-Based organizations, the organized Private Sector, the Media, and youth-led groups that have supported the Government at all levels in achieving the milestones recorded.

I am grateful to our forebears, all our Development partners, Multilateral Agencies, Civil Society Organizations, and other Stakeholders in supporting the process leading to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. We appreciate the unwavering support of UN Women led by Beatrice Eyong, Country Representative to Nigeria and the ECOWAS, not forgetting members of the Development Partners Group on Gender (DPGG), the UN Team Group (GTG), the consultants for all the support and guidance in the production of this Report.

This report is therefore a call to action for all stakeholders; government, civil society, the private sector, and individuals to join forces in accelerating Nigeria's progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment. Together, we can build a Nigeria where women and girls are empowered, contribute fully to society, and reach their highest potential.



Hon. Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, fsi,
Honourable Minister of Women Affairs, Nigeria

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I acknowledge the Renewed Hope Agenda of His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, which places Education, Health, and Social Investment at the core of Nigeria's development strategy. These pillars emphasize inclusivity and recognize the vital role of women, children, and youth in shaping our nation's progress through active participation and empowerment in every sector.

I am deeply grateful to the Honourable Minister of Women Affairs, Honourable Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, FSI, whose exceptional leadership has been instrumental in the successful production of this Beijing+30 Report. I also extend my sincere appreciation to all former Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, and dedicated staff members of the Ministry, whose invaluable contributions have laid a strong foundation for this milestone achievement.

A special thanks goes to the Director of the Women Development Department, Friya K. Bulus, and her dedicated team, including Nasiru Baba-Saleh and Victoria Lar, for their tireless commitment to ensuring the completion of this report. Their resilience and perseverance in overcoming challenges have been truly commendable.

The Ministry also extends its heartfelt gratitude to our partners in the UN System in Nigeria for their significant contributions. We are especially thankful to UN Women and its Country Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ms. Beatrice Eyong, for the generous financial support that enabled the report's development. We acknowledge the support of UNFPA for facilitating the printing of the report. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Ms. Patience Ekeoba, UN Women National Programme Officer for Coordination and Partnership, who worked closely with our team and consultants to ensure the planning, mobilization, consultation, review, and finalization of this report met the highest standards.

My heartfelt gratitude also goes to our dedicated consultants, Dr. Felicia Onibon, Dr. Aniekan Ukpe, and Mrs. Atinuke Odukoya, along with their support team, for bringing their expertise to this project. I appreciate the valuable contributions from the Development Partners Gender Group (DPGG), UN Gender Team Group members, Civil Society organizations, Women's Groups, Faith-Based Organizations, and the Private Sector, whose support has enriched the report's findings. I would also like to acknowledge the pivotal role of all stakeholders, particularly Princess Jummai Idonije, whose efforts were instrumental in finalizing Nigeria's Beijing+30 Progress Report.



Amb. Gabriel Aduda
Permanent Secretary
Federal Ministry of Women Affairs

Executive Summary

Nigeria joins other nations of the world to mark another major milestone, thirty years after the Beijing declaration in 1995. It is also a time to appraise the work done in the past five years since the last report was submitted. The significance of this report is the inclusion of work done around the Social Development Goals in Nigeria. The scorecard, in terms of the delivery of the commitments contained in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action alongside the SDGs, asserts that Nigerian women have come a long way, recording many successes nationally and globally.

Highlights of achievements specific to the past five years include the enactment of several cross-cutting and sectoral laws, policies, and frameworks in support of the rights of its women especially in the financial and agricultural sectors. Key examples include the revised National Gender Policy (2021-2026), the Women Economic Empowerment (WEE), and the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (2022) developed by the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning (FMFBNP) and the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of WEE intervention in Nigeria, National Policy on Gender in Basic Education (2021) which seeks to eliminate gender disparities in education to fulfil the constitutional right that every Nigerian child should have access to quality education, the framework for Advancing Women's Financial Inclusion in Nigeria (2020)-focused on driving sustainable access to, and usage of, financial services by Nigerian women, the National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change (2020) mainstreams gender equality into the implementation of National Climate Change Initiative.

A knowledge synthesis approach was adopted to produce this report. This combined a desk review of the Beijing +25 country report, sectoral situation updates and studies, relevant policy documents, and legal framework. Reviewed reports included those by ministries and agencies of the Government of Nigeria, the UN Country team, development partners and international organizations in Nigeria, civil society and research organizations across Nigeria, etc. A Focus Group Discussion was also held, with the aid of some semi-structured questions based on the guidance note, with key government agencies at the Federal and State levels, and a few civil society groups with representation across the six geopolitical zones. Key Informant Interviews and an online survey with a semi-structured questionnaire were also conducted involving various stakeholders across Nigeria's six geo-political zones.

Over the past five years, Nigeria has systematically prioritized women's economic empowerment as a direct path toward gender equality, poverty eradication, and inclusive economic growth. Women's economic empowerment thus contributes to the development of human capital and human capabilities, including their development. In realization of this, the current Renewed Hope Agenda of the current government has been to change the narrative with special attention paid to bringing succor to vulnerable women through a strategic programme of sustainable empowerment, training, and skills acquisition alongside traditional awareness creation and campaign programme.

In the past five years, several innovative actions were carried out by Civil Society Actors, collaborating with the UNWOMEN, Action Aid Nigeria, Global Affairs Canada, Mac Arthur Foundation, the European Union, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Organization [FCDO] to support Nigerian women in their effort towards promoting effective participation of women in politics and governance. Some of those actions that are still ongoing are the training of young women in politics across the country. Some had the courage to contest in the Local Government Elections as councillors and won. Wives of leaders in the political and traditional class especially, the governors, Senators, Members of the House of Representatives, and their State counterparts in the State Houses of Assembly are becoming leading champions for gender equality.

Traditional leaders are now co-opting women into their ruling councils across the country. These are giant strides toward breaking ground for women in the political arena. Just recently in 2024, Members of the Constitution Review Committee of the House of Representatives led by the Speaker organized an International Conference to promote 74 extra temporary seats for women which should be tested for 4 election circles [16 years].

In the past 5 years, Nigeria has experienced a rise in insurgency in the North East region by the militant terrorist groups Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa. In the South East region, the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, have continued to pose a serious security crisis and threaten the regional economy. These terrorist groups conducted numerous attacks on government and civilian targets, resulting in thousands of deaths and injuries, numerous human rights abuses, widespread destruction, the internal displacement of more than two million persons, and the external displacement of an estimated 332,000 refugees to neighbouring countries. Unfortunately, women and children are the worst hit during crises.

Agriculture, Forestry, and Land Use Agriculture is an important aspect of Nigeria's economy and accounts for about 22.86% of GDP. Even though only about 32 million hectares of land are under cultivation, agriculture contributes significantly to employment, food production, and export. Agriculture is the source of food and provides employment opportunities to 37% of the country's population, with strong linkages to other sectors through downstream activities such as agro-processing, consumption, and export, providing raw materials to industries, and providing a market for manufactured goods. Food security is a major priority for the Nigerian government.

In the Beijing Declaration adopted at the Fourth World Conference in 1995 on Women, the participating governments expressed their commitment "to advance the goals of equality, development, and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of humanity". The National Bureau of Statistics produces an annual Statistical Report of Women and Men, under the requirements of the Beijing Platform for Action and the SDGs gender indicators to assess the success of the previously stated goals. The 2021 edition which was published in January 2023 provides a look at the status of women and men in the country over time, based on statistics from relevant Federal and State MDAs, and it covers six focal policy areas of the economy:

Population, Health, Education, Works, Power and Decision Making, and Violence against Women/Crime (VAW/C).

In spite of efforts made at producing gender statistics in the country, a lot still needs to be done in the articulation of contemporary global and regional declarations including the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA 1995) and the Sustainable Development Goals (2015 - 2030). Relevant clauses of these resolutions state clearly that profiling the situations of women and men within the same environment and circumstances is the most powerful form of advocacy which brings into policy focus the existing gender gaps that require strategic and targeted policy actions for redress.

Nigeria's 2020 Voluntary National Review (VNR) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focused on the key issues of poverty (SDG-1) and an inclusive economy (SDG-8), health and wellbeing (SDG-3), Education (SDG-4), Gender equality (SDG-5), and the enabling environment of peace and security (SDG-16), and partnerships (SDG-17). This focus reflects Nigeria's development priorities which are currently embodied in the National Development Plan 2021-2026.

The Nigeria Men and Gender Equality Survey (NiMAGES): aims to provide credible information on the realities of gender relations in Nigeria to stimulate debate and provide a platform to advocate for gender equality. This survey investigated gender-related perceptions and behaviours, focusing largely on the relevant views and behaviour of men. Themes of particular priority included domestic violence, women as leaders, and women's decision-making roles.

This report is divided into six sections and contains an overview which reflects the introduction to the report then a conclusion and next steps. Each section focused on specific areas that featured highlights of priorities, achievements, challenges, and setbacks that are specific to the 5 - year period under review. Section three, focused on progress across the Beijing Platform's 12 critical Areas of Concern, while section four, focused on National Institutions and processes. Section five, featured Data and statistics relevant to gender advancement in the last five years in Nigeria. Section six gave the conclusions and next steps.

Section One: Overview

The normative framework for the promotion and protection of gender equality and women's rights in Nigeria are Constitutional, Legislative, Judicial, Policy and International human rights, and Humanitarian Law Treaties. Nigeria has ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (29-10-93); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (29-10-93); Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (13-7-85); Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (28-7-01) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (19-4-9). In order to meet its commitments to the United Nations Security Council Resolution on women, peace and security (UNSCR 1325) and other related Resolutions, the Government of Nigeria developed and launched the country's first and second National Action Plans (NAPs) in 2013 and 2017 respectively. The third NAP will be officially launched by December 2024. Over the years, the policy documents have been domesticated in sixteen (16) states of the federation through the adoption of State Action Plans (SAPs) on women, peace and security. In the last five years, Nigeria has also enacted several cross-cutting and sectoral laws, policies, and frameworks in support of the rights of its women, especially in the financial and agriculture sectors. Key examples include: The Revised National Gender Policy (2021- 2026) – recently revised and focused on making gender equality (GE) a key driver for economic growth and development, the Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (2022) – developed by the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning (FMFBNP) and the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of WEE interventions in Nigeria, National Policy on Gender in Basic Education (2021) which seeks to eliminate gender disparities in education to fulfil the constitutional right that every Nigerian child should have access to quality education, framework for Advancing Women's Financial Inclusion in Nigerian (2020) – focused on driving sustainable access to, and usage of, financial services by Nigerian women, the National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change (2020) –mainstreams gender equality into the implementation of national climate change initiatives. Moreover, in recent years, the security sector of Nigeria has demonstrated commitment to enhancing gender-responsiveness in policy and operations in line with the provisions of UNSCR 1325. These include the adoption gender policies by the Armed Forces of Nigeria (2021), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (2021) and the Nigeria Police Force (2024). This is in addition to the establishment of a Women, Peace, and Security Sector Reference for inter-agency collaboration and coordination for the advancement of gender equality and women empowerment in the security sector.

Nigeria remains a highly patriarchal society, where men dominate both public and private spheres of life, including the lives of their women. Women are in a subordinate position, and male children are preferred over the female. The influence of the mother and the father is particularly significant in shaping and perpetuating patriarchy. The mother provides the role model for daughters, while the father demonstrates to sons what it means to 'be a man' (World Bank 2005:6). Despite a general commitment to the principle of non-discrimination as enshrined in Section 2 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the country

falls short of the desired result of giving males and females equal opportunities to resources and advancement. Evidence abounds that several negative aspects of gender relations, such as gender-based division of labour, disparities between males and females in access to power and resources, and gender biases in rights and entitlements, remain pervasive in Nigeria. The combination of federation and a tripartite system of civil, customary, and religious law makes it difficult to harmonise legislation and remove discriminatory measures. However, any law, which is contradictory to Federal Law, or the Constitution can be challenged in a Federal Court. With a legal system with varying legal standards, the Nigeria Constitution provides the ultimate principles, rules, and doctrines from which the legitimacy and hierarchy of all other legal norms in the country are validated.

While Nigeria seems to have made some steady progress over the past 5 years on the Global Gender Gap Index, it could make far more progress gauging by the synthesis of performances across the four dimensions of the globally acclaimed Index. In 2020, Nigeria ranked an overall 128 score. In the Economic Participation and Opportunity sub-index, Nigeria ranked 38 (among 153 countries benchmarked) with a score of 0.738 Gender Gap Index (GGI) (World Economic Forum, 2021). For the Health and Survival sub-index, Nigeria ranked 135 with a GGI of 0.964 (World Economic Forum, 2021). For the Education Attainment sub-index, Nigeria ranked 145 with a GGI of 0.806 (World Economic Forum, 2021). Notably, Nigeria ranked 146 in the Political Participation sub-index, with a GGI score of 0.032 (World Economic Forum, 2021). In the 2023 global gender gap report, Nigeria's economic opportunity and participation score was 0.715, placing it in 54th place globally. The global ranking for educational attainment was 137th, with a score of 0.826. Health and survival is ranked 99th, with a score of 0.967; and political empowerment is ranked 142nd, with a score of 0.041. Nigeria's political empowerment score was the worst of all four indices, with only about 4% of women elected into public office in Nigeria. For the health and survival rating, Nigeria scored 96.7%, achieving the highest score in sex ratio at birth but falling behind in healthy life expectancy. Regarding economic involvement and opportunity in Nigeria, women hold more than 64% of senior positions despite earning only half as much as men. Compared to men, women in Nigeria have lower educational attainment levels. The percentage of female students in junior secondary schools is 49.8%, while the percentage of female students in colleges of education is 32.7%, the lowest in all educational levels.

The 2024 ranking however saw Nigeria improve its ranking by five spots on the 2024 Global Gender Gap index, to 125th position out of 146 countries. A disaggregation shows that Nigeria climb on the rankings is an improvement in the 2023 score by +1.3 percentage points, resulting in overall gender parity in 2024 of 65%, with positive changes in the political empowerment dimension, educational attainment, and economic participation and opportunity. The country has made notable strides in economic participation and opportunity, where it records 72.6% of the gap closed, placing it 49th globally on the subindex. Notably, Nigeria excels in gender parity for senior leadership roles, achieving full parity, with women's representation in legislative, senior official, and managerial roles doubling that of men. However, significant gender gaps persist in professional and technical workers, with parity at only 62.6%, as well as in estimated earned income, which stands at 50.1%. With relatively high labour-force

participation rates for both men and women, parity on this indicator stands at 89.9%, ranking 13th highest overall. In educational attainment, gender parity reaches 84.2%. However, a persistent gender gap exists in literacy rates (73.9%), with women lagging far behind men. Secondary education enrolment parity stands 98.9%, while tertiary education enrolment reached 72.6%. In terms of political empowerment, the 2024 report ranked Nigeria among the bottom 10 performers (136th) with a parity score of 6.6% but there were improvements, in particular on ministerial positions since 2023, with women's representation rising from 10.7% in 2023 to 17.6% in 2024.

Three recent policies, in particular, – the Revised National Gender Policy (NGP) (2021-2026), the Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) Policy and Action Plan (2023) and the National Development Plan (NDP) (2021-2025) signal a desired new national response to gender equality, women empowerment and social inclusion agenda in Nigeria. The NGP (2021-2026) represents a set of minimum standards set by the Nigerian Government for an assessment of its compliance to its responsibility for gender equality, good governance, accountability, and social responsiveness to the needs of its vulnerable groups, including women and girls. The policy is in consonance with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the supreme law of the land, which includes specific provisions protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. The National Women's Economic Empowerment Policy and Action Plan is a roadmap for advancing WEE in Nigeria and the product of a year-long National WEE Policy Dialogue designed and implemented by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs (FMWA) and the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning (FMFBNP)–with technical assistance from development partners and input from grassroots women, the private sector, Nigeria's WEE ecosystem. It is a strategic document to fill the WEE policy gap in Nigeria for several strategic and policy planning purposes, including the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on women's livelihoods, the need to harness multisectoral collaboration, and to strengthen the implementation of several strategic WEE-focused national economic plans and policy documents across sectors. The NDP (2021-2025) on the other hand, underscores the relevancy of development policies in Nigeria to the evolution of development and gender theories. Between 1960 and the present, Nigeria has developed a series of development plans as part of efforts to move the country towards the part of growth and development. A national development plan stipulates a country's medium-term strategic direction, development priorities and implementation strategies for years. Nigeria's NDP (2021-2025) succeeds the country's Economic Recovery and Growth (ERGP) Plan 2017-2020 and the Economic Sustainability Plan 2020. Unlike the previous development plans which were largely gender-blind, the NDP 2021-2025, prioritizes women's economic empowerment in at least 6 sectoral areas, including agriculture and food security, digital economy, education and human resources, gender equity, Health etc.

Nigeria acknowledges that gender equality is a fundamental human right that is essential for the achievement of sustainable development. It is a critical component of Goal 5 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Nigeria, like many other countries, has made efforts towards achieving gender equality. Equity remains the foundation of the core principle of Agenda 2030

- ‘leave no one behind’. By implication, achieving this core principle demands that ‘gendered power relations’ which serve as triggers of social, political, cultural, and economic exclusion are dealt with, while the benefits of sustainable development are extended to groups that are routinely and structurally excluded, that is, women, girls, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and the poor among others.

Women make up about 50% of Nigeria’s population (UN Women, 2019). Considering both the intrinsic and extrinsic values of gender equality, women and girls are now seen as very central to Nigeria’s transformative agenda, without which it will be difficult to achieve any sustainable development and growth. Families are healthier, safer, and better nourished when the women raising them are more knowledgeable and capable of meeting their needs. Development standpoints on women’s need and welfare are also helping to refocus attention on the situation of girls across nations. If resources reach women and girls early, transformative change can happen quickly, while poverty can be stopped before it starts. The invincibility of this standpoint was aptly noted in the UNDP perspective on the gender debate, that ‘a development that is not engendered is endangered’ (Human Development Report, 1995).

Methodology

A knowledge synthesis approach was adopted to produce this report. This combined a desk review of the Beijing +25 country report, sectoral situation updates and studies, relevant policy documents and legal framework. Reviewed reports included those by ministries and agencies of the Government of Nigeria, the UN Country team, development partners and international organizations in Nigeria, civil society and research organizations across Nigeria, etc. A Focus Group Discussion was also held, with the aid of some semi-structured questions based on the guidance note, with key government agencies at the Federal and State levels, and a few civil society groups with representation across the six geopolitical zones.

Key Informant Interviews and an online survey with semi-structured questionnaire, were also conducted involving various stakeholders across Nigeria’s six geo-political zones, including members of the Development Partners Group on Gender (DPGG), high officials in Ministries of Women Affairs both at the Federal and the State, civil society, academia. 74 respondents, spread across the country, participated in the survey. The objective was to harvest priority actions, achievements and challenges as outlined in the guidance note. In order to sequence and harmonize all the harvested information, a narrative review methodology was used to tease out the achievements and challenges while identifying gaps in delivery and proposing further actions in priority sectors to align even more with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A stakeholder validation workshop was convened to present a zero draft of the report and enable content related feedback from various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) from the national level and from the States; civil society organizations, women groups, the media and community - based organizations. The report was finalized after the stakeholder input from the validation meeting was integrated.

Section Two: Priorities, Achievements, Challenges and Setbacks

2.1 Top Priorities for Accelerating Progress for Women and Girls in the Last Five Years

A detailed analysis of Nigeria's current strategic policy documents – the WEE Policy, the NGP 2021-2026 and the NDP 2021-2025 on advancing women's economic empowerment and gender equality reveals nine sectoral priority focus in the last five years. These nine sectoral priorities are as follows:

a. Agriculture and Food Security

In Nigeria, women account for at least 60% of the farming population working as suppliers of labour and farm managers, mostly on rural farmlands. Ironically, a large gender gap persists in the agriculture sector. Limited access to productive factors such as credit and land ownership for women account for a high proportion of the current gender gaps in the sector. In most Nigerian communities, women farmers are vulnerable and discriminated against by virtue of religious and cultural biases and norms limiting female participation and contribution to agricultural development. There is low participation of youths and persons with disabilities across gender in agriculture (FMFBNP Agenda 2050, Agric Working Group, 2020). Available evidence shows that in 2007 only 8,550 women farmers accessed loans compared to 20,098 male counterparts. These huge gender gaps have been identified as needing urgent collaborative action by the public, private, non-profit, and development sectors, if Nigeria is to meet SDG 2 - Zero hunger by 2030 (NESG,2019, Sahel Newsletter Volume 7,2014; NBS, 2009). The Agriculture and Food Security sector contributes about 2% of the nation's GDP in the 2020 fiscal year. The government seeks to ensure equity in ensuring that women have access to every agricultural input. Efforts are also targeted at building their capacity and inclusion in food security its food security initiatives. In this regard, the participation of women in the sector is expected to increase from 19.6% to 25% by 2025. The NDP provides for existing agriculture financing schemes and initiatives to support value chain actors in maintaining, realigning and scaling up their operations while ensuring inclusion for women and youth-owned agrobusinesses. This will be achieved by working with current agriculture financing ecosystem actors, including microfinance, commercial banks, the Development Bank of Nigeria and ensuring the reorganisation of existing institutions such as the Bank of Agriculture and National Agricultural Insurance Corporation, and credit programmes among others. (Vol. 1, pg. 40). The NGP calls for concrete and focused coordination of collaborative action by the public, private, non-profit, and development sectors to improve farmers' productivity, reduce the high rates of post-harvest losses, enhance value addition and local processing, ensure market linkages, and the equitable engagement of women and youth. There is also the possibility of an increase in the availability and affordability of nutritious food in Nigeria. Lastly is the possible transformation of rural areas into vibrant hubs for food production and processing, creating jobs, and improving the livelihoods of our people (FMFBNP, Agric TWG, 2020).

b. Digital and Financial Inclusion

Women's financial inclusion is foundational for women's economic empowerment and a necessary catalyst for a woman's ability to grow her income and be financially independent.

However, having access to the financial system is not enough. Women and girls must also be empowered with the skills and knowledge to exploit the numerous options available to them in the financial system. Accessible, affordable, and user-friendly financial tools can ease this journey and transform a woman's economic power and her capacity to thrive.

Digital financial inclusion simply means achieving financial inclusion using digital technology. It refers to using fintech, big tech, blockchain and other digital technologies to expand access and use of formal financial services to a large segment of the population. (Ozili, 2024). A 2023 Access to Financial Services in Nigeria (A2F 2023) Survey by Enhancing Financial Innovation and Access (EFInA) indicates that of Nigeria's estimated female adult population of 56.3 million people, only 22%, or 12.5 women, can be classified as being economically empowered. Education, digital, and financial literacy are the most significant drivers of empowerment, followed by household and group agency, regarding women's autonomy to join and influence decision-making in social groups and the agency to do productive work and own assets.

Addressing the gender gap is key to tapping the potential of women in the digital economy. There is an increased need for financial products, services and initiatives targeted at meeting the needs of women. Nigeria's digital economy is positioned to capture the potential benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and drive job creation and income generation efforts, especially for women, youth and informal businesses (NDP, Vol 1. Pg. 93). The NDP recognizes the role of the digital economy in the development process as well as effective inclusion of women in both the formal and informal economy. It recognizes that lack of funding affects the promising start-ups of several women entrepreneurs and their low-skill development in digital technology. During the implementation period of the NDP, the government aims to improve digital financial services by increasing digital financial inclusion, especially in rural areas from less than 2% to 25% by 2025. An estimated 500,000 graduates (with at least half, being females) are expected to be enrolled in advance digital skills programme annually. The effort is expected to improve the inclusion of women in sectors such as trade, finance and agriculture where women are seriously challenged.

c. Governance, Institution and Political Participation

To entertain women's economic empowerment, there is a need to address the underlying factors contributing to it (Anne, et al, 2011:4). Such factors include national legal and policy structures, economic systems, market structures, marriage, inheritance, and educational systems. (Anne, et al, 2011:4). In furtherance, the NDP asserts that the government will enact and implement policies that encourage citizen participation (especially women and youth) to provide legal backing for citizen engagement. This will ensure increased transparency through higher citizenry access to information and participation in key decision-making areas. The government seeks to create channels and mechanisms to engage directly with citizens and allow for the collection of feedback from the citizenry, ensuring that diverse voices are heard, and corresponding actions are swiftly taken. (NDP, Vol1, pg. 109). Evidence has shown that when women are directly engaged by policymakers, their voices are heard and there are high chance that their needs would be addressed.

Despite its ratification of most of the international and regional instruments on women's rights such as the CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Maputo Protocol, Nigerian women continue to be underrepresented and marginalised from political decision-making processes. Currently, women's political representation in Nigeria is abysmally low. From 1999 till date, only 157 women have been elected into the 469-member National Assembly (38 senators and 119 members of the House of Representatives), compared to 2,657 men (616 senators, 2,041 reps) during the same period. (Premium Times, 2023). The results of the 2023 presidential and National Assembly elections have further exposed Nigeria's failure to implement several treaties and statutes it signed, which are aimed at ensuring women's involvement in politics. Of the 92 women who contested for the Senate in the February elections, only three won, while out of the 286 who contested for seats in the House of Representatives, only 15 were declared winners. The last two political cycles have seen a regression in the numbers which in 2015 stood at 6.4% and 6.7% in the higher and lower Houses of Assembly. (UN Women, 2021). At the State level, women make up approximately 16% of ministerial appointments and in state legislatures only 4.43% of representatives are women. (Premium Times, 2019, YIAGA Africa 2020). In 2023, upon assuming office, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu appointed 48 Ministers. Since then, Betta Edu, the then Minister for Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, was suspended; while Solomon Lalong, the then Minister of Labour and Employment, resigned to move to the Senate. This brought the number of Ministers down to 46. On October 23, 2024, the President sacked five Ministers—three of whom were women; and appointed seven new Ministers, which included three women. This restored the number of Ministers to 48. Thus, with eight out of 48, women make up only 17% of the Ministers, translating to a continuous underrepresentation of women in the federal cabinet.

The factors making for this unfortunate situation are varied and include: a lack of legislative framework to guarantee a minimum representation of women; an absence of mechanisms to unite women in politics across party lines to advocate for gender-responsive reforms that seek to actively promote equality—this involves actions to empower women in their households/communities and broader reform processes including paid care work. There are also socio-cultural factors and barriers leading to marginalization and limited leadership opportunities for women in public life; insufficient positive role models of women in politics and oftentimes insensitive portrayal of women aspiring for political leadership in the media; high levels of patriarchy, coupled with limited male champions on gender equality concerns; and inadequate coordination among key partners working to support a reversal of the low representation of women in politics. Moreover, the views of grassroots and vulnerable women are hardly sought in the development of legislations and policies designed for them or on their behalf. Young women in particular experience a double jeopardy as a result of gender and because young people are equally marginalized in politics.

Despite the low figures on women's representation in political leadership positions in Nigeria, progress has been made on several fronts, which could subsequently lead to significant changes. From the perspective of support from international development partners, UN Women

for instance has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), an institution embedded in the National Assembly, to serve as a gateway to the National Assembly for advocacy on gender-sensitive legal reforms. Also, the Young Women in Politics Academy, piloted in Benue and Cross River States, with support of UN Women to train and mentor young women to join political parties has not only built the capacity of targeted beneficiaries, but has further aroused political interest among more young women who have great potentials for leadership and would eventually increase the number of women political leaders.

d. Education and Human Resources

Education remains the fundamental means of empowering women economically. Nigeria has made significant progress in expanding children's access to school and learning opportunities, especially, with the implementation of State Education Sector Plans (2011-2023). The country has prioritised on-time enrolment, constructed school infrastructure, and expanded the use of data for educational planning. The Universal Basic Education Act (2004) and associated State UBE Laws provide free and compulsory education for all Nigerian children. The UBE Act dedicates 2% of Nigeria's Consolidated Revenue Fund annually to the supervising Commission, but this is not always used efficiently or effectively. The 3 years of senior secondary education are not free. Only 26 states have adopted the Child Rights Act; provisions against child marriage are yet to be incorporated into state laws, and loopholes permitting child marriage persist.

The National Policy on Gender in Education (2021) aims to ensure equitable access for girls and promote quality and inclusive education for all. While initial results over the past ten years indicated some positive strides, more recent results do not suggest rapid progress is being made in the education sector. The percentage of students attending primary school increased from 61% in 2016 to 68% in 2021. (UNICEF, 2023). For the poorest children, gender parity in secondary school attendance has improved from 0.68 in 2016 to 1.03 in 2021. (UNICEF, 2023). Girls account for no less than 38% of Nigeria's out-of-school children. More than 50% of girls are not attending school at the basic education level. (UNICEF, 2021). Major barriers such as child marriage, poverty and gender discrimination prevent girls from learning. In northern Nigeria, long-held cultural beliefs still fuel gender discrimination and limit girls' ability to reach their full potential. Additionally, families don't see the value of sending their daughters to school where they receive low-quality education. Families will often choose to marry off their daughters instead of continuing their education.

Emphasising on skills development to equip Nigerian women with the right competencies for employability through investments in key programmes and skills, the NDP provides that Nigeria will increase investments in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) and Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to boost women enrolment in these areas. (Vol. 1, Pg. 19)

e. Women and Gender Equity

The NDP (2021-2025) affirms that the full participation of women in the economy will significantly contribute to improving socio-economic indicators such as GDP, employment generation and poverty reduction. It is believed that gender equity in the Nigerian workforce by 2025 would increase GDP by 9% with an overall gain of USD89bn. The main objective of the NDP as far as women and gender equity is concerned is to improve gender parity and reduce gender-based violence in the country. The projection is that by 2025, Nigeria's ranking on the Global Gender Gap Index will reduce from 128 to 100 and reported GBV cases will also reduce from 17.4% to less than 10%. To achieve these strategic objectives, the government is committed as follows:

- To support the economic empowerment of women by facilitating access to financial literacy, providing capacity building for women entrepreneurs (both at national and state levels) and supporting MSMEs' business viability.
- Facilitate access to funds through digital finance tools as well as access to advisory services.
- Collaborate with private financial institutions to negotiate reduced interest and premium rates for women, particularly rural women, to grow their businesses into viable enterprises.

(NDP 2021-2025, Vol. 1, Pg. 141)

These initiatives are expected to boost job creation for women and entrench a central role for them in the nation's economic growth and development. An estimated N108bn is allocated to achieve the goals under Women and Gender Equity over the NDP implementation period and will be used to execute priority projects and programmes aimed at promoting gender equity at both national and state levels. (NDP, Vol. 1, Pg. 199-200)

f. Population and Identity Management

With the Nigeria's population growing at 2.6% per annum, total population has been projected to double from 201.0 million to 401.3 million by 2050. (Sola Ogundipe, 2019). With average current poverty rate at 40.1%, unemployment at 33.3%, average GDP growth rate at below 4% and the country also battling with severe infrastructure deficit, there is the need to stem the rate at which population growth is outpacing development. The NDP affirms that this can be done by maximising the potential contribution of women to economic activities, through improved health, education and life opportunities for adolescent girls and intensified investment in women economic empowerment. (Vol 1, Pg. 142). Accordingly, the NDP seeks to achieve a reduction in population growth from 2.6% to 2.5% by 2025, fertility rate from 5.3% to 4.7% by 2025, urbanisation rate from 52% to 40% by 2025, rural urban migration from 6.5% to 5% in 2025, as well as increase life expectancy at birth from 55.2 years to 56.5 years by 2025. The NDP underscores women economic empowerment as part of the strategy to achieve these. (Ann et al., 2011), had earlier identified access to resources, including human capital, financial

capital, social capital and physical capital, as building blocks that women can draw on to succeed economically or to exercise power and agency.

g. Accelerating the Realisation of Democratic Dividend

The UNFPA defines a demographic dividend as the economic growth potential which can result shifts in a population's age structure. (UNFPA, Demographic Dividend). This is when the share of the working age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working age population (less than 14 and 65 and older). This is a period in which the proportion of working-age people is increasing relative to the rest of the population. Countries with a demographic dividend experience a decline in the proportion of children because of low fertility, and the proportion of elderly people is also small. This contributes to the creation of the needed savings, reduced mortality rate, improved productive conditions, financial and social institutions, and effective social protection systems that accelerate growth and development.

The NDP (2021-2025) underscores that a favourable demographic age structure can fuel economic growth in Nigeria. (Vol. 1, Pg. 145). Hence, Nigeria can benefit from a demographic dividend when there are many more who are of working age relative to those not, either because they are too young or too old. The NDP, however, notes that these benefits are not automatic but would require that the country embarks on policies to accelerate the demographic transition and develop its workforce to be productive. Accordingly, it seeks to achieve an increase in female secondary school education from 67% to 71% by 2025 and the empowerment of women for greater participation in the labour force from 55% to 62% by 2025.

To achieve the female secondary school enrolment target, the NDP sets out the following strategies:

- Implement policies that can increase girls' enrolment in school, including general increases in educational access, especially at the secondary school level.
- Free secondary school education will be offered to all adolescent girls in Nigeria.
- Female educational programmes will facilitate the expansion of family planning coverage.

(Vol.1, Pg. 147)

To achieve the target for greater women empowerment in the labour force, the NDP sets out the following strategies:

- Empower women in Nigeria to transform the economy from the current state of high fertility, low education and slow economic growth towards a state of high education and rapid economic growth.
- Expand the availability of microfinance, establishment of local savings groups, and community banks that can support poor Nigeria women who may not possess collaterals for loans from advanced financial institutions.
- Scaling of successful small and medium-size businesses will be supported by advanced financial institutions and favourable trade policies, especially those that will support women and youth.

The funding to drive the demographic dividend as contained in the NDP by all tiers of government in Nigeria is being driven through relevant MDA budgets. The range of programmes in the budget document includes fertility declines, secondary education opportunities for adolescent girls, women's economic empowerment and agricultural extension services.

h. Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection

From 2018 to 2019, the poverty level among Nigerians rose from 39.1% to 40.1%. On average, 4 in every 10 Nigerians or over 82.9 million Nigerians live in poverty. (NBS, 2019). According to the NDP, poverty is the inability to live a fundamentally basic progressive life that would guarantee a sustainable and prosperous future. About 40% of Nigerians live below the poverty line. Today 74.63% of women do not have any income-generating activity compared to 63.43% of men. (NBS, 2019). Further, only 79.66% of women in both rural and urban Nigeria have some level of education, further exacerbating the poverty divide. The NDP aims to lift 35 million people out of poverty by 2025 and implement a national social protection system that will create a pathway from poverty to economic empowerment for all Nigerians, including women by 2025. It is expected that by 2025, the poverty headcount rate will reduce from the current 40% to 34%. In the same vein, through access to social services by the most vulnerable in the communities, the number of people concerned (POC) provided with relief materials (food, non-food, medical) will also increase from 37,647 to 1,000,000 by 2025. A major strategy to achieve these targets is the adoption of a harmonised and transparent approach by the government at all tiers to generate support for social reforms, strengthen the existing governance network and develop a robust coordination framework to create a sustainable path to economic empowerment for over 50 million Nigerians. (Vol. 1, Pg. 151).

The Renewed Hope Agenda of the Bola Ahmed Tinubu led Federal Government of Nigeria articulates clear strategies designed to harness and provide social protection for women and other vulnerable groups in Nigeria, including:

- the conditional cash transfer In Care of the People (COPE) is targeted at households with specific social categories - those with children of school age, female-headed or those who are elderly, physically challenged, fistula or HIV/AIDS patients;
- the health fee waiver for pregnant women and children under five and
- the National and Community-based health insurance scheme.

i. Employment and Job Creation

In a 2020 report, the NBS reported that female unemployment was higher among the genders at 32.5% while males had it at 31.8%. 9labour Force Statistics – Volume I: Unemployment and Underemployment Report, Q4 2020, p. 37. With its triple objective – job creation, ease of access to finance for entrepreneurs, especially, MSMEs, and promotion of women and youths in job creation and diversification – the NDP (2021-2025) underscores that the government

will support gender equality for gender-balanced jobs opportunities across all sectors to significantly reduce the alarming rate of unemployment among women. (Vol.1, Pg. 164). In essence, the NDP has a deliberate plan to address female unemployment by setting specific targets for the five years of the NDP. See Table 1 below. It is expected that between 2021 and 2025, an estimated public investment of N351 billion will have been allocated to achieve the goals of employment and job creation.

Table 1: Employment and Job Creation Objectives and Indicators

Objectives	Key performance indicators	Baseline	Target
Create sustainable jobs	Number of jobs created	469,000	21 million
	Unemployment rate	33.3%	19.6%
	Productivity per capita	2,100	3,706
Create new and enterprises	Number of new jobs created by businesses	3.1 million	4 million (2025)
	Percentage of new businesses still in operation after 5 years	45% ⁶⁴	50%
Promote inclusion	Female labour force participation (%)	48.52% ⁶⁵	70%
	Youth labour force participation, (Ages 15 – 24) (%)	29% ⁶⁶	50%

Source: National Development Plan 2021-2025, p.237

Over the past five years, Nigeria has systematically prioritize women’s economic empowerment as a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. The economic empowerment of women thus contributes to the development of human capital and human capabilities, including their development. In realization of this, the current Renewed Hope Agenda of the current government has been to change the narrative with special attention paid to bringing succor to vulnerable women through strategic programme of sustainable empowerment, training and skills acquisition alongside traditional awareness creation and campaign programme.

2.2 Specific Actions to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls

For a long time, the level of coordination and accountability for GEWE in Nigeria remained poor as a result of incoherence in programme planning, poor advocacy and reporting on GEWE issues and a lack of transparency in the administration of interventionist programmes. This was despite the presence of several networks, coalitions and groups that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in the country. To address these issues, Nigeria, through the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, the Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning and the Mariam Babangida Women Development Centre, with the support of its partners, under the auspices of the Development Partner Group on Gender (DPGG), has concentrated efforts at strengthening coordination between all actors at the Federal and State levels in planning and programming on gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE). Specific efforts sought to establish Zonal Coordination Mechanisms/Platforms in each of the

six Geo-Political zones in Nigeria to bring together relevant stakeholders from the states to discuss and drive accountability and investment for GEWE in Nigeria.

The coordination platform is conceived as a multi-layered one: the zonal platforms will facilitate the formation and strengthening of states and local government coordination platforms on one hand and the establishment and strengthening of a national coordination platform on the other hand. Following the launch of the Zonal Coordination Platforms in the six geo-political zones, stakeholders converged in early 2024 to jointly review and draw up broad action plans on women's governance, WPS, WEE, humanitarian actions and EVAW issues around which programming could be centered. Accordingly, an action plan to promote gender equality and empowerment of women through a complimentary triple role and mandates of promoting normative standards, gender coordination and programmes operation was agreed in five different thematic areas: women and governance, women peace and security, ending violence against women and girls, women's economic empowerment and humanitarian action. Specific actions to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of different marginalized groups, across the 6 geo-political zones are represented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Actions to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of different marginalized groups

STATE	THEMATIC AREAS	ACTION	GAPS	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? MDA	TIMELINE	RECOMMENDATION	REMARKS
Benue	Women's Participation /Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Holding Quarterly meetings - Share data on performance! - Advocacy for policy/law reforms - Conduct periodic assessments for activists within the GEWE space - Advocacy visits to the LGAs to activate the Women Development Councils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weak capacity - Lack of legislation and policy framework - Funding - Lack of data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MWASD and other stakeholders 	6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly meetings - Share data on GEWE - Advocate for legal reforms - Capacity assessment - Increase funding 	Benue State is vibrant on GEWE but there is room for improvement in political will
Federal Capital Territory (FCT)	GBV Prevention Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liaise with existing spotlight initiative structure with FCT & International donors, NAPTIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding, Coordination, Reporting, Culture of silence on victims and response rehabilitation, Access to data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SDS - Gender Department - NGOs - CBOs - FBOs 	September, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy visit to Hon. Minister of FCT to ensure budgeting allocation to GBV issues in 2024 	
	Women in Politics and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achieve 35% affirmative action/political will: civil and political 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor orientation of stakeholders, Traditional rulers, Religious leaders, and Indigenous groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SDS Gender women in politics, NGOs in politics, NWD 	2023 – 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy visit to Hon. Minister of FCT on political participation 	
	Women, Peace & Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement national action plan on UNSCR 1325 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of existing platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SDS, - Gender department - NGOs working in WPS 	2023 – 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy visit to Hon. Minister of FCT on security support 	
	Humanitarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FCT victims of various armed conflicts – Mohammed Action Coordination FCT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of existing mechanisms in the humanitarian network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SDS, - Gender - NGOs 	2023 – 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy 	
	Women living with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zero discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zero recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SDS, Gender, NGOs 	2023 – 2027		

Kogi	Women Participation/Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set up a platform for coordination - Capacity building - Develop standard operation procedure (Handbook of the activities) on the ground - Sensitization to targeted people: stakeholders, traditional rulers, religious groups associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No coordination platform - Lack of funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MWASD - CSOs - CPI - Ingraiko-Josh - RECEP 			
	Women Peace and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensitization on the need for peace and security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-effective implementation - Inadequate funding - No budgetary allocation - No functional coordination – Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism for state action (SAP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MWASD - LGA - KOPSEN 	4 September to 27 November, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budgeting allocation on Peace and security - Capacity building on budget tracking 	
	Ending Violence Against Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensitization on implementation of VAPP Law - Simplification of the VAPP Law - Creation of SARC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-implementation of VAPP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MWASD - PDCRC - Min. of Justice - CSOs working in the area of women 	Is ongoing, will end in November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is need for immediate implementation of VAPP Law - Need for inauguration of state implementation committee on VAPP Law 	
	Women Economic Empowerment	Provide women training on the use of latest innovations in Agric Mechanization	Non-domestication of WEE (Women Economic Empowerment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State MWASD - Min. of Agriculture - CSOs dealing with women empowerment - WOFON 	December, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is need to domesticate the WEE Policy and Action Plan 	

	Humanitarian Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensitization on flood emergency response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State MWASD - SEMA - S/A on Humanitarian - Ministry of Environment - Ministry of Health 	Ongoing till Dec, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is need to sensitize people to move out of flood prone areas 	
	GBV Responsive Budget & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensitization on GBV budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No coordination among GBV implementing partners - Lack of data - Lack of funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMWASD - PDCRC - CSOs 	Ongoing till December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a need for coordinating team - Harmonization of GBV Data 	
Kwara	SGBV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need assessment - Sensitization/ awareness creation - Legislation review - Strengthening existing SGBV mechanism through quarterly forum - Facilitate the inclusion of GBV Education in the school curriculum - Expansion of existing shelter and care - Simplification and popularization of VAPP Law in the four major languages and dialects - Building capacity of law enforcement agencies in the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inadequate data - Low level of awareness of legal framework & report - Weak legislation - Weak prosecution - Low popularization - Implementation of VAPP Law, Child Right Law, and other Gender-related Law and Policies - Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Women's Affairs - Ministry of Justice - Civil Society Organization - Development Partners (GLOHWOC, OCDI), Hadis Foundation, Action Aid Nigeria, ARFH, Worthy Life Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly Quarterly As the need arises Quarterly October 2023 – September 2024 September 2023 – August 2025 October 2023 – December 2023 September 2023 – December 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening data collection and reporting mechanism on SGBV - Advocacy to legislators and other key relevant stakeholders - Inclusion of GBV education in schools - Simplification and popularization of VAPP and all relevant laws and policies on GBV - Need for SGBV and survivor funds budgetary allocation and release - Need for gender-sensitive budgeting for women's empowerment 	

Niger	Women's participation in public life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low literacy level - Insecurity - Funding gaps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase access to capacity and capacity in MIS/ICT of Gender officers in data collation. - Increase advocacy with relevant stakeholders - Ensure quarterly interaction with desk officers starting in September. - Converge a state summit of political and appointed female office stakeholders to advance gender mainstreaming, coordinating mechanisms and information gathering. - Increase advocacy for the timely release of budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Min. of Women Affairs, - FOMWAN/ - WOWICAN, - NCWS 	Quarterly review meetings		
	Women s Economic Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding, - Insecurity - Social- Cultural barriers - Poor access to health services - Illiteracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resuscitate and establish more skills acquisition centres that are economically demand driven. - Increase media engagement and Advocacy's. - Ensure the implantation of and domestication of gender policies. - Increase and Strengthen partnership with scientific development institutions at the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director women's Affairs in the ministry - Ministry of budget and planning 	Quarterly meeting		

			<p>national and state levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase partnerships with other MDA's, CSO's, NGO's and international agencies (UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF etc). 				
Ending Violence Against Women and other Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor data reportage - Social-cultural barriers - Irregular flow of <i>survivor's fund</i>, - Poor funding, - Inadequate <i>safe homes</i> - Lack of implementation of the VAPP act, - Stigma and discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aggressive media sensitization. - Ensure the full enforcement of the law for violators and legal action. <p>Increase advocacy with other institution-MDA's, especially in the education sector and schools.</p> <p>Ensure the implementation of VAPP act and gender policies.</p> <p>Build capacity of GBV Management committee and GBV Stakeholders committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GBV desk officer - GBV coordinating officer 				
Women's Peace and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-implementation/ domestication of the UNSR 1325 declaration in the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure the domestication of the UNSR 1325 declaration - Increase advocacy to relevant stakeholders and Government of Niger State around the domestication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director women Affairs - CSO's - Min. Of Justice - Min. of Internal Security - Min. of Humanitarian Affairs 	Quarterly meeting			

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Min of Women Affairs and - NGO (Human protection, Rule of Law and Justice foundation) 			
	Humanitarian Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor funding, Delay in releasing budget, Lack of Human Resources and Capacity 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Min. of Humanitarian Affairs - Min. of Women Affairs - Min. of Internal Security. 	Quarterly meeting		
	Gender Responsive Budgeting		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase advocacy with the Min. of Finance and Niger State Planning Commission - Continuous partnership/ Synergy with relevant stakeholders 	Director Planning in the Min. of women Affairs, Coordinator of SARC-Sexual Assault Referral Centre	Quarterly meeting		
Nasarawa	Women's participation in politics and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensitization - Advocacy - Capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSOs working in silos - Lack of funds - Religious and traditional beliefs - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State MWSD - Network of women working in governance 	Quarterly meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political assessment - Need for coordination - Network of women in governance and politics 	
Plateau	Humanitarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need assessment to identify gaps - Coordination meeting with State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) - Annual budget for the elderly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of data and documentation - Political will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Women Affairs (Dept of Social Welfare) - SEMA - Committee for Women's Affairs - State House of Assembly - CSOs 	Quarterly reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free antenatal for pregnant women - Resettlement of IDP - Budget for IDP and issues of women's sanitation - Strengthen coordination with CSOs 	The monthly reports from stakeholders to the Ministry of Women Affairs for coordination to identify gaps and data compiled.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of women affairs should pay hospital bills to vulnerable groups 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Faith Based Organization - State Traditional Council - State Religious Council 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agencies - Recommendation of site for Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) - Free Immunization - Family planning for IDPs by USAID 	
Women participation in governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Domestication of state action plan - Local action advocacy of 35% affirmation - Collaboration with CSOs for women inclusion in governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budgetary allocation to implement state and local action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State government - Women groups - Civil society organizations - Faith based organizations (FBOs) - Elder states men 	Quarterly reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy to the state government and legislators on budgetary allocation 	Monthly	
Women Economic Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skill Acquisition in Ministry Centre - Inter-agency collaboration with sip on grant - N-power collaboration with ITF and NDE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data and documentation - Funds for businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Women Affairs - Ministry of Commerce and Industry - National Directorate of Employment (NDE), - Plateau State Small and Medium Development Agency, (PLASMEDA) - Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), ITF, SMEDAN 	Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity building for Monitoring and Evaluation - Capacity building for women in rural areas on financial literacy 	Monthly	
- Women Peace and Security and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Domestication of state action plan for the 5 pillars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of funds for sensitization of action plans in 13 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women Affairs - Women mentors, 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced advocacy for more 	Commissioners	

	Disaster Risk Reduction	- Local action plan has been translated into three local languages; Afizerem, Berom, Hausa and Grail		- Women Peace and Security (WPSN) - He4She		women in governance spaces	
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2.3 Achievements, Challenges, and Setbacks in Progress towards Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls

Although Nigeria has taken steps towards achieving gender equality, significant disparities persist. Female representation in political and economic decision-making roles remains low. In 2019, women held only 6.7% of parliamentary seats and accounted for 22.4% of the labour force participation rate [World Bank. (2021). World Bank Open Data: Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/country/Nigeria>]. Gender-based violence and harmful cultural practices also impede progress in this area [World Bank. (2021). World Bank Open Data: Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/country/Nigeria>]. Table 3 below shows goal 5 indicators and SDGs targets.

Table 3: Indicators and SDGs Target

S/N	SDGs Indicators	Baseline 2015 (%)	Derived ERGP Target 2020 (%)	SDGs Target 2030 (%)
1.	Proportion of ever partnered women & girls aged 15 years & older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months, by forms of violence & age group.	33.5	20.4	0
2.	Proportion of ever partnered women & girls aged 15 years & older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months, by forms of violence & age group.	34.9	23.2	0
3.	Percentage of Women aged 20-24 who were married or in a union before age 15. Child marriage is condemned would over as a result of several issues associated with it.	17.7	11.8	0
4.	Percentage of women aged 20-24 who were married or in a union before aged 18.	39.9	26.6	0
5.	Percentage of girls & women aged 15-49 who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting by age group.	24.8	16.6	0
6.	Proportion of women aged 14-49 who make their own informed decision regarding sexual relative, contraceptive use & reproductive health care.	24.8	49.9	100
7.	Percentage of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land (male).	78.1	85.4	100
8.	Percentage of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land (female).	71.1	80.8	100
9.	Proportion of Individuals who own a mobile phone (Urban).	74	82.7	100
10	Proportion of Individuals who own a mobile phone (Rural).	48.3	65.6	100

Source: Oweibia et al, 2024

Gender equality is a fundamental human right that is essential for the achievement of sustainable development. It is a critical component of Goal 5 of the United Nations Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs), which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Nigeria, like many other countries, has made efforts towards achieving gender equality. However, significant disparities still exist, particularly in political and economic decision-making roles. The table 5 above examine the progress made towards achieving gender equality in Nigeria, the challenges faced, and the way forward.

Progress towards Gender Equality in Nigeria

Nigeria has made some progress towards achieving gender equality in recent years. For instance, the country has enacted laws and policies aimed at promoting gender equality. The National Gender Policy, which was launched in 2006, is one such policy. The policy seeks to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in all sectors of the economy. It also aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls [80]. In addition, Nigeria has ratified several international conventions and treaties that promote gender equality. These include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. These international instruments provide a framework for promoting gender equality and empowering women. Furthermore, Nigeria has made some progress in increasing female representation in political and economic decision-making roles. For instance, in 2019, women held 6.7% of parliamentary seats, up from 5.6% in 2015 [World Bank. (2021). World Bank Open Data: Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/country/Nigeria>]. The country has also made some progress in increasing the number of women in leadership positions in the private sector. For example, in 2019, women held 22.4% of senior management positions in Nigerian companies, up from 19.7% in 2016 [World Bank. (2021). World Bank Open Data: Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/country/Nigeria>].

Challenges to Gender Equality in Nigeria

Despite the progress made towards achieving gender equality in Nigeria, significant challenges still exist. One of the major challenges is gender-based violence. Women and girls in Nigeria are at risk of various forms of violence, including domestic violence, sexual violence, and harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage. According to the National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) conducted in 2018, 30% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence, and 10% have experienced sexual violence [81]. Another challenge is the low level of female participation in the labour force. Although the number of women in the labour force has increased in recent years, women still account for only 22.4% of the labour force participation rate [3][4][12][82][83]. This is partly due to cultural and social norms that limit women's access to education and employment opportunities [Raimi MO, Raimi AG, Raimi Mariam O (2019). How Universities Can Create Green Jobs for Students. Peer Res Nest. 2019 - 1(2). PNEST.19.07.003. <https://peernest.org/article-inpress.php>]. Furthermore, women's representation in political and economic decision-making roles remains low. Despite the increase in the number of women in parliament, women still hold only 6.7% of parliamentary seats [World Bank. (2021). World Bank Open Data: Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/country/Nigeria>]. This is far below the global average of 25% [Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2021). Women in national parliaments. Retrieved from <https://data.ipu.org/content/women-in-parliament>]. Similarly, women's representation in

senior management positions in the private sector is still low, with women holding only 22.4% of such positions [World Bank. (2021). World Bank Open Data: Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/country/Nigeria>.].

2.4 The Effects of the Confluence of Different Crises and Measures to Prevent the Negative Impact on the Implementation of the BPfA

Covid 19 Pandemic

COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020. In Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Health confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in Lagos, on February 27, 2020. As the number of cases increased in Nigeria, the government responded by imposing a 14-day lockdown in Abuja, Lagos, and Ogun State to stem the spread of the virus. Several other states, including Rivers, Kaduna, and Ekiti, followed immediately, initiating full or partial lockdowns while deploying contact tracing, testing for cases, and isolating identified cases. To curtail the spread of the virus, the government employed several measures including restrictions on inter-state movement, the closure of schools and restrictions on large gatherings, including in public spaces such as markets and places of worship. Over 80% of respondents who participated in the online survey identified Covid-19 and other pandemics as having the biggest negative impact on the country's implementation of the BPfA in the last five years. See Figure 1 below.

Impact on women and girls

A 2020 UN Policy Brief titled 'Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women', reminds us that health crises typically have impacts on women and girls that are unique from those on men. Evidence from the increase in sexual and gender-based violence or 'SGBV', during the 2013-2015 Ebola pandemic in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea is well documented. The COVID-19 pandemic was no exception to such trends. Globally, the pandemic witnessed an uptick in reports of gender-based violence or 'GBV'. As the pandemic spread in Nigeria and the country went into lockdown, it became clear that the pandemic and the public health measures the government adopted did not factor in the impact on women and girls at risk of suffering GBV. According to the UN, in just the first two weeks of COVID-19 restrictions in Nigeria, reports of GBV doubled around the country. Victims were trapped at home with their potential abusers which increased the possibility of tensions turning violent. Statistics from the Federal and State Ministries of Women Affairs in Nigeria also show that reports of GBV almost tripled from March 2020 to April 2020 in 23 out of 36 states in Nigeria. (United Nations, 2020b).

According to the inspector general of police, Mohammed Adamu, more than 700 rape cases were reported across Nigeria between January and May 2020. Additionally, from April 2020 to May 2020, organizations such as Women-support NGOs, and Women's Aid Collective, received and handled about 156 cases of SGBV, out of which 25 were cases of sexual violence involving under-aged girls as victims. (Thisdaylive, 2020). Similarly, communications specialist at ActionAid Nigeria, Lola Ayanda, explained in July 2020:

Since the COVID-19 lockdown began in March, ActionAid Nigeria has seen an alarming increase in reported cases of rape and killings of women and girls as a result of the pandemic. Between March and June, we've documented 299 cases of violence against women and girls across seven states; 51 of these were sexual violence cases involving minors between the ages of 3 to 16.

The Nigerian government missed out on several opportunities to prevent the heightened levels of SGBV women experienced during lockdowns. For one, while developing lockdown measures, the government did not sufficiently consider the ways such measures and the pandemic might affect women and girls uniquely. Possible evidence of this was that the government excluded the Ministry of Women Affairs, NGOs, and other women-focused organizations from the Presidential COVID-19 Task Force and the government's general planning and decision-making. In addition, the government did not consider the provision of SGBV support services by civil society groups, shelters, or sexual assault trauma centres as 'essential services'. As such, rape survivors and other survivors of violence were precluded from moving around to seek help at hospitals, shelters, or other safe spaces.

In Nigeria, however, SGBV survivors lacked access to referral pathways following the blanket 'stay at home' order issued by the government. Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN) reported, for instance, that first responders in Abuja, such as the Dorothy Njemanze Foundation, struggled to reach victims who called for help and had trouble accessing state services because the courts and hospitals were closed or not accepting non-COVID-19 patients. Shelters also refused to accommodate any new women to prevent the spread of the virus. The referral pathway mechanism for managing SGBV victims failed in Abuja and other parts of Nigeria.

Gender Issues in the Security Sector

In many countries, the institutional culture of the security agencies enforces certain 'masculinized' values and behaviours, which in turn impact on the whole society's notion of masculinity. The underrepresentation and unequal participation of females within the security sector have found many different expressions. Firstly, females have traditionally, all over the globe, made up a very small proportion of the employees within security agencies such as the police and the armed forces. It also mirrors the constructed feminine gender role, in which women are depicted as victims, the objects rather than the agents of security (Enloe, 1980).

The integration of gender issues into the security sector is now recognised as a key to operational effectiveness and institutional credibility. For example, increasing the recruitment of female staff, preventing human (woman) rights violations, and collaborating with women 's organisations in creating an efficient, accountable, and participatory security agency, which responds to the specific needs of men, women, girls, and boys. Mainstreaming gender into the security sector also involves identifying/assessing the different insecurities faced by men, women, girls, and boys. The results of the assessment might, in turn, highlight the need to include gender initiatives or initiatives that address the particular security needs of women, men, boys or girls in the security sector. Women often bring specific skills and strengths, such

as the ability to diffuse potentially violent situations and employ good communication skills to minimise the use of force

The realisation that gender disparity contributed in no small measure to the suffering of women and girls during security emergencies and the need to mainstream gender issues into security sector reform provoked the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. This resolution has continued to shape the role of women in the Nigerian armed forces. The Nigerian armed forces have now become gender-sensitive by ensuring that the career paths of female personnel are unhindered. Previously, women were often restricted to careers within the supportive aspect of the military such as finance, human resources, personnel, logistics, medical services, welfare, etc. However, the complexity and dynamism of the spectrum of security challenges facing the world demand that all useful approaches and means must be employed to combat the menace. The launching of the armed forces gender policy in March 2021 is an added impetus to the efforts of Nigeria through the Ministry of Women Affairs and other civil society organisations working to ensure the protection of women, girls, and children's rights in the male-dominated environment of Women Affairs Nigeria. The Nigerian armed forces are now becoming gender-sensitive in ensuring that the career paths of female personnel are unhindered. Apart from the gender policy, the Nigerian army now has a gender desk. The armed forces can now boast of producing female officers up to the rank of two-star generals and women are currently engaged in all areas of specialisation, including combat operations. The enactment of a gender policy for the armed forces is expected to address gender issues, especially those related to women marginalisation and suffering during security emergencies (NGP situation analysis, 2021). Along with the Armed Forces, the Nigeria Police Force (July 2024 revised edition) and the State Security Service (May 2023) have also developed their Gender Policies.

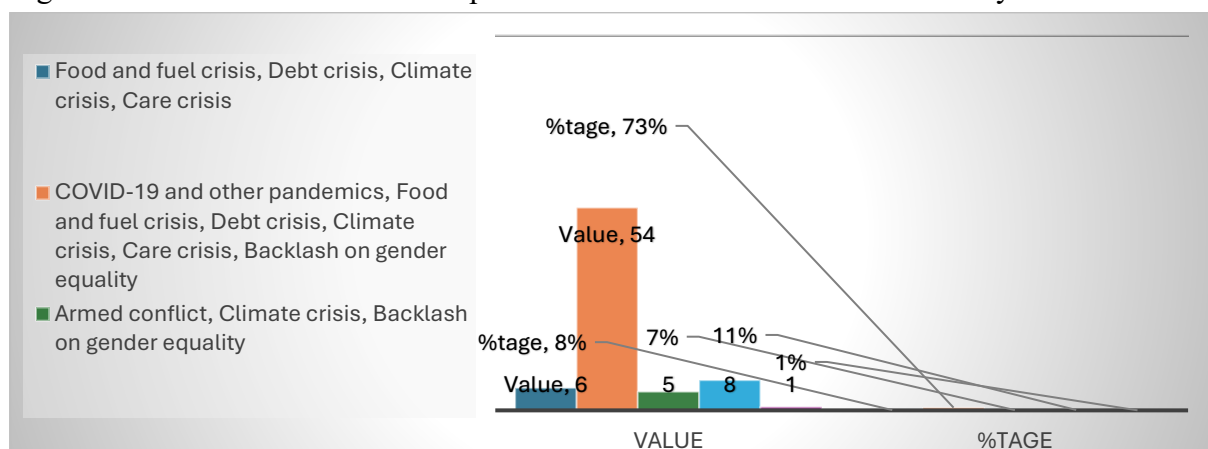
Peace and Conflict Transformation

In the past 5 years, Nigeria has experienced a rise in insurgency in the North East region by the militant terrorist groups Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa. In the South East region, the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, have continued to pose a serious security crisis and threaten the regional economy. These terrorist groups conducted numerous attacks on government and civilian targets, resulting in thousands of deaths and injuries, numerous human rights abuses, widespread destruction, the internal displacement of more than two million persons, and the external displacement of an estimated 332,000 refugees to neighbouring countries. Unfortunately, women and children are the worst hit during crises. In the Niger Delta or in the North, women are killed even when they carry no arms or pose no threat to the attackers. They suffer in the hands of the attackers as well as in the hands of the peacekeeping soldiers and Joint Task Force. Especially in recent face-offs in the North, during raids, the soldiers also torture and kill women for the 'sins' of their insurgent husbands. Hundreds of thousands of women are reported to flee their homes during these crises. About 80 percent of refugees in Nigeria within Nigeria and neighbouring countries are women. Some never return to their homes. Most of them lose their husbands and become the sole breadwinners of their families. This new responsibility for women – in most of these impoverished communities –

adds to the psychological trauma they are already suffering. The Niger-Delta women are among the poorest in the whole world and this is because of the Niger-Delta crises, which make worse the poverty already, caused by environmental degradation and oil spills.

A more worrisome twist to conflict in Nigeria is the spate of kidnappings. Nigeria accounts for 26 percent of the world’s kidnap cases (Edomi, 2013). There are over 1000 cases of kidnap reported annually in Nigeria. Kidnapping started in the Niger Delta as a way of forcing government response to the demands of militants in the region, but this has evolved into a “money-making” business and is now at a staggering scale. Since the 2000s, it has become tactic for terrorists and, unfortunately, targeted at women and children. There have also been reports of women kidnapped for ritual purposes.

Figure 1: Crises that affected the implementation of the BpFA in the last five years



Source: Survey, 2024

2.5 Actions to Mitigate the Effects of the Crises

Insecurity and violence, climate change, and other emerging risks are the root causes of vulnerability across the Northern states. In 2022, north-east Nigeria experienced a severe food and nutrition crisis for the second consecutive year. Some 4.1 million people faced emergency levels of food insecurity during the lean season. United Nations, Humanitarian Response Plan (2023). Some 1.74 million children under five suffered from acute malnutrition, a 51 percent increase from 2021. The Nutrition Sector estimated that 178,000 pregnant and lactating women were acutely malnourished. Levels of acute malnutrition in Borno and Yobe States were the highest recorded since 2016, when surveillance started, with admissions for severe acute malnutrition in nutrition treatment centres in the two states at an all-time high. Many factors contributed to the increase in food insecurity and acute malnutrition, including disruption of farming and trade due to the continuing conflict.

Global increases in prices of food commodities, agricultural inputs and fuel due to the war in Ukraine also added to already high inflation. Climate change, particularly flooding in the harvest season, coupled with limited opportunities for income, involuntary population movements to areas with few opportunities for livelihoods and limited humanitarian aid because of insecurity, affected food availability, further aggravating the food and nutrition

crisis. In response, humanitarian partners are working closely with development and stabilization actors, the Government and local actors to facilitate a coordinated and sustainable approach to addressing humanitarian needs. In line with a more gender-responsive plan, humanitarian and development partners plan to continue to facilitate the participation and leadership of local women's organizations in country-level coordination mechanisms and provide dedicated gender expertise to support gender assessments in partnership with sector leads to provide up-to-date gender analysis for planning and implementation of priority programming.

In the context of COVID-19, broader interactions through the Internet and social media provided platforms for stalking and perpetration of intimate partner violence. Cases of some abusers stalking their victims became rampant. The reported cases showed that the abuser had more access to the victims' private information, control over online accounts and could use electronic devices to track the victim's whereabouts (APC, 2017, in CITAD, 2019 p29). At the individual level, most women do not have access to the technology they need for communication. This meant that when they experienced domestic violence or other forms of gender-related abuse, they could not use technology to report it. The government, on its part, did not take adequate measures to ensure women have access to and use technology for protection against both offline and online harassment.

Even though SDG 5 is a standalone, other goals may not be achievable if this goal is not achieved through gender equity. Instability and displacement hinder access and benefit of opportunities as women always have the short end of the stick in conflict and displacement.

2.6 Planned Priorities for Accelerating Progress for Women and Girls in 2026-2030

Available evidence indicates that economic growth has been slow and disconnected from redistributive policies that could reduce income inequality and alleviate poverty in Nigeria. There is a high prevalence of extreme poverty as 48% of the population lives in extreme poverty (that is below \$1.90 per day). In 2019, the Gini Coefficient, a measure of statistical dispersion intended to represent income inequality, was 35.1, which implies high-income distribution inequality. The inequality is restricted to income, ownership of resources, and access to basic social and economic facilities. Furthermore, there is the social exclusion of youth, women, and people with disability (PWD) from economic benefits. Evidence on women shows that a low proportion has access to economic resources and effective services. Worse still, 21% of women in the non-agricultural labour force and 55% of female-headed households are landless. Access to microfinance and tenure rights to land is largely low among women and people with disabilities (CC TWG, FMFBNP 2020, 57). Some major challenges facing Nigeria, as it advances progress on GEESI issues, include:

a. Planning with Little Facts

A great challenge facing Nigeria is the disrespect for research and accurate data with attention to anecdotal evidence. The apartheid towards research and evidence gathering has made it difficult to have GEESI disaggregated data in key social indicators. Issues affecting the elderly,

women, youth, people with disabilities and hard-to-reach communities are unaddressed or poorly managed in some cases. The political apathy towards research has made GEESI disaggregated data difficult despite the fact that women constitute 49.7% of Nigeria's population (NPopC, 2019); and 15% of citizens with disabilities (Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GEESI), 2018). Where available, there are significant gaps, breaks in continuity and time lags in such data. For example, there are no data on the following key indicators, among others:

- % Out-of-school rate for youth (including people with disabilities) of secondary age
- % of GDP spending on investment in vocational and technical education tools
- Number of skilled technology-enabled jobs.
- Proportion of women and people with disabilities that have access to microfinance
- Proportion of women and the disabled with secure tenure rights to land
- Proportion of women in non-agricultural labour force (data available for 2012)
- Proportion of female-headed households that are landless
- Direct economic loss attributed to disasters concerning the National Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

b. Women and Political Marginalisation

Analysis of the performance of women in the previous general elections has demonstrated the continuous marginalisation of women in leadership positions. In spite of the spirited efforts of successive First Ladies, women's movements, and development partners, women are still sidelined in leadership positions within political parties and national structures. In addition, ethnic and religious tensions; the influence of religion, culture, and gendered power dynamics are preventing women from participating in government and governance in the social and political sphere.

c. Existing Laws and Disconnect from Reality

The employment law enacted in 1971 cannot guide present-day relationships due to the changing world of work. The emergence of COVID-19, for instance, has hastened the arrival of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in Nigeria. The pandemic has introduced platform economies and the informalization of work not envisaged in the law. The more recent Disability Act of 2019 provides for the full integration of Persons with Disabilities into society. It also establishes the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities. However, is yet to be implemented, and there is no structure in place for the implementation. Even with VAPP Act 2015, the Police recorded 717 cases of rape between Jan and May 2020. Even though the Child Rights Act has been passed into law, there are still an estimated 10 million children out of school as of 2018 data (Cross-Cutting TWG, FMFBNP, 2020).

d. Security Challenges, Women and Social Inclusion

The Nigerian security landscape has changed drastically with the emergence of multiple security challenges arising from insurgency, banditry, herdsman-farmers clashes, and kidnapping, among others. The abduction of hundreds of school children has forced the

closure of many schools in the North with the attendant implications of out-of-school children, child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and poverty, among others. Insecurity has also forced the displacement of many families from their homes into camps and temporary shelters with attendant negative consequences more pronounced for women and people with disability.

e. Exclusion and Vulnerability

A situation analysis of Nigeria's gender policy environment would reveal five vulnerable groups: (1) people living on less than \$2 a day as prescribed by the World Bank; (2) persons with disabilities; (3) people below the ages of 18 years of age (including the girl child); (4) people retired or the elderly from 65 and above and (5) people in prison or correctional facilities. People in these categories are the most vulnerable due to the lack of public infrastructure and the social contract between the Government and its citizenry.

It is pertinent to raise the following fundamental questions facing gender policy in Nigeria: How do we bring an inclusive policy lens to tackle socio-economic and cultural barriers? How do we re-imagine freedoms within our limitations of – resources, conflict, climate, and violence? What should be the role played by everyone on the demand and supply sides of governance, including the poor, especially women and young people? (NES 26/NESG, 2020).

A majority of Nigeria's population suffers preventable health problems, unemployment, and food scarcity with inequitable access to services and inconsistent social welfare policies. Nevertheless, building a nation with a social contract or welfare system is achievable by focusing on providing primary health care, subsidized education, and economic empowerment. Education is a game-changer. It can give a girl better life chances to earn an income and give her skills and confidence to be a better parent. It can delay fertility, so girls get a chance to be girls before they become women. The need for a robust financial and economic system that is factual. Nonetheless, creating an environment free of conflict and engenders freedom of all is urgently needed and incorporated into the public planning process.

f. Covid-19 and Policy Insights

COVID-19 posed some fundamental challenges that require social policies that are robust and grounded in evidence. Otherwise, the pandemic may increase inequality, exclusion, discrimination, and youth unemployment in both medium and long terms. Building a robust social policy that is grounded will require behavioural insights into Nigerian's response to the pandemic and previous responses to complex emergencies. Starting with the prevailing pandemic, it would help us understand why, as the number of infections increased, citizens became less caring about keeping the COVID-19 safety protocols. In the post COVID-19, more significant investment in Nigeria's social investment portfolio is a necessity. The Federal government should ensure that the home-grown school feeding Programme, one of the few social investments that reaches children in public schools directly, has a protective law or at least a robust implementation framework to back it. Ease of doing business to increase job opportunities that can lead to quicker economic recovery is essential. A stimulus that focuses on strengthening farmers and growing a new crop of agro entrepreneurs with new skills and tools driven by a technology-backed knowledge economy is required.

Technological advancements and growing access have increased citizen participation in social, economic, and political space. The global covid 19 pandemic raised critical questions around access and adoption of technology in addressing the wide income and opportunities gaps among all social categories. The government at all levels, has to raise to this challenge and address existing infrastructural deficits.

Policy Priorities:

a. System Strengthening and Planning

The National Gender Policy (NGP) requires firm implementation and adequate punishment for all acts of gender discrimination and inequality. A deliberate implementation of policies designed to elevate more women-owned small enterprises, and the strategic re-education of the populace, especially young people, on the roles of women in society is of critical essence (CCTWG, 2020). The implementation of the NGP will require a repositioning and strengthening of government institutions. Such steps can help in minimising bureaucracy, improve responsive consultation with entrepreneurs before regulation changes, and guide the restructuring relevant agencies. To complement these efforts is the need for tax breaks, stabilizing the currency and improving the overall ease of doing business in Nigeria. It is also important to design and implement policies that support entrepreneurs with innovative ideas that leverage technology for scale (CC TWG, 2020).

There are clear needs for decentralization of some government agencies to enhance efficiency and responsiveness to emerging needs. Agencies such as the Immigration Service, Nigeria Police, Corporate Affairs Commission, rail and air transportation management require such re-engineering to remain relevant. The reduction of the Federal influence on these agencies will promote more sense of belonging across all the various stakeholders and interests these institutions are servicing and their continuous relevance in the face of emerging complex situations. The design of a consistent and periodic reporting mechanism that allows for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation will help to focus on GEESI performance indicators.

b. Legal Framework

Implementation of legislative measures that prohibit all forms of harmful practices and appropriate sanctioning of individuals who engage in or support said acts. The domestication of the Child Rights Acts in all Nigerian states and more stringent punishment for offenders who disregard the provisions of the law. Enactment of laws to enforce quota representation for women in leadership/political positions

c. Economy

The following are considered essential in addressing some of the challenges in the economy:

- Strengthen the MSME policy to facilitate and sustain a vibrant MSME sub-sector that will be the primary driver of national economic growth and employment.

- Accelerate the profitable expansion of existing MSMEs along the value chain and fostering the emergence of new MSMEs in Nigeria, especially among women and the youths.
- Special attention should be paid to Women in the Agriculture value chain, ensuring they have access to opportunities and resources for equitable participation.

d. Social Security

The introduction of a social security number would help determine the basic living standard in terms of the quantum of health care and education facilities and housing that must be catered for. Therefore, policy priorities should tilt toward the gender equality and social inclusion (GEESI) approach, which addresses unequal power relations between women and men and between different social groups. This approach requires a reconceptualization of power, access, opportunity, and control. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) was an unexpected shadow pandemic emerging from COVID-19. All just and upright citizens and institutions must respect the policy framework, Programme, and practice, to protect women, girls, and boys from SGBV. The framework includes relationship skills strengthening; empowerment of women; services ensured, including health, police, legal, and social services; poverty reduced; environments, including schools' public spaces and work, made safe; child and adolescent abuse prevented while nurturing family relationships; and transformed attitudes, beliefs, and norms about gender and gender equality (UN-Women, 2020).

e. Education

The following are suggested:

- The implementation of federal policies with a clear accountability structure for states found wanting in implementing educational policies, especially on inclusion. Also, grassroots education of citizens, including the elderly, especially in disproportionately affected regions should be prioritised
- Better quality of investment in TVET vocational training education.
- Eliminating gender disparities at all levels of education. Access to post-graduate education with world-class infrastructure for learning and research and support for scientific reforms that underpin the transformation of the continent (Education TWG).

f. Access to Justice

There is a plethora of social policies that can transform lives, but the budgetary allocations are inadequate to implement them. Transparent and accountable framework for Impact Investments, low-cost spends, and pro-poor funds in collaboration with professional bodies in the private sector are imperative. Inclusive growth frameworks must embed Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GEESI) frameworks and apportion at least 30% representation for women, youth, and the informal sector; and 5-10% for people with disabilities (Environment TWG, 2020).

Access to justice through the implementation of provisions on victims' remedy and restorative justice, including compensation, cost, damages to victims of crime; restitution to victims of crime; restoration of possession of immovable properties; and plea bargain. A review of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) is necessary to ensure proper implementation of the constitutional guarantee of the timely dispensation of justice and preventing inordinate delay, (Section 396). Implementation of the ACJA clause 20 on the right of women to post bail, which is free.

g. Media

The media needs to create effective platforms for Public-private dialogues supporting women's movement should work with the media to adopt GEESI-informed audience and issues-based reporting – that recognises the high percentage of women entrepreneurs operating in the BE and their different needs from those of men. The media needs to do more to facilitate behavioural change in the media, development partners and government, and the private sector. There is a need to articulate a clear business case to actors of the benefits of targeting their BE-related products at female-headed micro-enterprises.

Section Three: Progress Across The 12 Critical Areas of Concern

3.1 Inclusive development, shared prosperity, and decent work

The Nigeria Gender Policy reports that economic growth has been sluggish and with no connection to redistributive measures that could lessen poverty and income inequality. Nonetheless, if executed strategically and transparently, the policy environment surrounding financial inclusion and social investment is developing and has the potential to have significant effects. Big questions on financial inclusion and market remain. Lack of access to basic education, healthcare, and financial services are key drivers of Nigeria's gender inequality. However, there are examples to draw from how the Nigerian governments at local, state, and federal levels are becoming more responsive in social investments and spreading safety nets to mitigate financial vulnerabilities.

3.1.1 Actions to advance gender equality in the world of work

Women dominate micro-enterprises in the micro-small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector. The majority of women-owned businesses fall into (MSMEs) category. The MSMEs are supposed to be the bedrock of industrialisation in Nigeria. Poverty is still rife at 42%. 83 million people are extremely poor in Nigeria (Oradi, 2019). There are 17.2 million MSMEs in Nigeria, and more than 17 million are micro-enterprises. MSME represents 96% of the businesses in Nigeria; and contributes 75% of the National Employment (Salihu et al., 2015). A vast proportion of the entrepreneurs in the formal sector of the economy is male. None of these enterprises operate with a form of legal nor financial protection. Similarly, over 75.6% and 65% of Microenterprises and SMEs, respectively, have no business plans. Worse still is that 97.8% of the Micro enterprises are not registered, while 96.6% of them are uninsured (Salihu et al., 2015). The consensus emerging is that MSMEs are vulnerable to business shocks

and increased risks. Consequently, the mortality rate of these enterprises is 20%. Although in 2017, 59.6 million jobs were created by MSMEs in terms of the number of employees per enterprise compared to only five percent (5%) or 2.8 million of the jobs created by other stakeholders in the economy. Despite these contributions, few MSMEs have access to finance. The percentage of finance access by MSMEs was 5% of 2011 GDP (ERinA, 2012). In 2017, loans accounted for only 17.5% of the total finance source for most MSMEs (Kale, 2019). There are employment practices that equate to commodification of women and a denial of the link between their productive and reproductive roles (Orbih & Imhonopi, 2019). There are instances where women (especially in the banking sector) are asked to raise the high-net-worth customers through any means possible (thereby exploiting their femininity). Other instances are the refusal to support staff maternity plans including pregnancy on the job and adequate time-off. Worst still, less than 5% of board leaders are women (Nkechi, Emeh Ikechukwu, & Okechukwu, 2012). Under-representation of women in the formal sector and unmet needs in agriculture and MSMEs without commensurate business environment support diminishes women's ability to maximise their economic potentials.

Policy statement

A business environment that provides inclusive development, support, and services to enhance the growth/performance of MSMEs, especially those led by women, and enhancement of women labour participation.

Objectives

- i. Facilitate a gender-responsive ease of doing business strategies for MSMEs
- ii. Plan a gender-responsive policy design along with MSME participation
- iii. Commit to business policy continuity for stability
- iv. Engage the 'formal' business sector corporate strategy process for GEESI compliance

Targets

- i. Development of Workplace Gender Policy to eliminate inequities and barriers to women and other vulnerable groups in the workplace
- ii. Affirmative action principles where 60% of MSME support are set aside for women, like the Central Bank (CBN) Policy of 2014
- iii. Affirmative action on Board appointments to be diversity-balanced, including gender, geography, generation, disability, and faith without sacrificing merit
- iv. Access to loans and funds with realistic and sustainable conditions and financial information training for MSMEs
- v. Digitisation of Government to Persons (G2P) payments, and financial inclusion to reduce corruption and misappropriation of funds meant for MSMEs
- vi. Draw up frameworks that would allow Nigeria women to participate fully in the AfCFTA cross-border trade experiences and opportunities.

Other broad policy actions being targeted by governments at all three-tier levels include:

- Strengthened/enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in recruitment,
- Retention, and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation
- Measures to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace
- Improved financial inclusion and access to credit, including for self-employed women
- Improved access to modern technologies (incl. climate-smart technologies), infrastructure, and services (incl. agricultural extension)
- Mechanisms for women’s equal participation in economic decision-making bodies (e.g. in Ministries of Trade and Finance, Central Bank, and National Economic Commission)

3.1.2 Actions to recognize, reduce, and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, promote work-life and family balance, and strengthen the rights of paid care workers

A disconnect exists between the appreciation of women's reproductive and productive work, which alienates women from economic opportunities and voice. Work in the domestic sphere is often treated as 'non-productive work' and not linked with public policy and productive enterprise. Childbearing and rearing are tasks that aid the growth of the national workforce and should be recognised and respected as such in the planning process. Instead, support services, such as crèches, paternity leave, and paid maternity leave, are still few, while women's unpaid care work is hardly recognised and valued. Globally, the definition of women's work and their productive capacity is increasingly recognised as transcending more than one sphere. This reality contrasts the widely held perception that women's role is limited to the domestic space.

Furthermore, Oxfam (2021) puts the value of women's unpaid work annually at 10 trillion dollars globally. Nigeria at 1/3 of the world, Nigerian women's unpaid work comes to about 300 billion USD annually most of it without any labour-saving or technological device (OXFAM, 2021). Despite this reality, women's contributions are undervalued and underutilised as earlier expressed in this policy document (see section on ‘gender and employment’). The derivative effect of these concrete contributions is that women's unpaid work makes all the rest of the work possible (OXFAM, 2019).

Policy statement:

To evolve a policy framework that takes into consideration the intersectionality of women's productive and reproductive work to enhance the quality of life of women and families

Objectives:

- i. Advocate for new norms that de-stigmatise domestic unpaid work across gender groups;
- ii. Address work-life – imbalance in national planning;
- iii. Make women unpaid domestic/care work part of national accounts;
- iv. Focus on provision of basic necessities and services for enhanced quality of life

Targets

- i. The value of domestic work in National Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is accounted for;
- ii. Reducing Women's Time burden to enable their participation in National development
- iii. Media adopts GEESI-informed and issues-based reporting
- iv. Society-wide adoption of culture of 'gender-respect' and gender equity for national development;
- v. Access to safe family planning methods and choice

Strategies:

- i. Women Advocacy Groups working with the media to adopt GEESI-informed and issues-based reporting
- ii. Families raising boys and girls in the culture of gender-respect; and boys growing up into men who share in household chores as a norm
- iii. Countrywide advocacy and awareness creation to eliminate discriminatory cultural practices against women and girls, including: gender-based violence, hindered access to justice and land, and harmful traditional practices in their various forms.
- iv. Advocacy and policy action in support of paternity leave across all government, private sector and civil society employment platforms;
- v. Government and civil society raising awareness and ensuring access to safe family planning methods and choice.
- vi. Sustained engagement of media owners, government, the private sector, civil society organisations and development partners on gender transformative change for national development.

3.1.3 Actions to reduce the gender digital divide

No doubt, digital skills are essential for women in Nigeria to effectively leverage digital technologies in their businesses and careers. However, without adequate access to digital infrastructure, women are unable to access digital skills training programs and other resources, limiting their ability to acquire the skills needed to succeed in the digital economy.

To address the gender digital divide in Nigeria and promote women's economic empowerment, government across all level is prioritizing investments in digital infrastructure and technology, particularly in rural and low-income areas where access is limited. Government is also prioritizing programs that promote digital skills development for women, including training and mentorship opportunities, and provide incentives and subsidies to encourage women-owned businesses to adopt digital technologies.

Policy statement

To address the gender gaps in digital innovation, literacy, and improve women's digital access in furtherance of women's economic empowerment.

Objectives

To provide women with full and equal access to technology that will allow them to expand their economic opportunities, adequately support their families, and enrich their quality of life.

Targets

- i. Introduced or strengthened programmes to provide universal meaningful connectivity for women and girls, especially for underserved areas’
- ii. Taken measures to remove the discriminatory barriers faced by women and girls to access, use and design digital tools (e.g. costs of devices and data, lack of skills, safety, restrictive social norms).
- iii. Taken measures to support the creation and expansion of safe, affordable, accessible, relevant and inclusive public and private digital tools and services.
- iv. Introduced or strengthened programmes to increase the digital literacy and skills of women and girls.
- v. Taken measures to promote gender-responsive STEM education.
- vi. Taken measures to create conditions for gender-responsive digital learning environments.
- vii. Applied gender-responsive and human rights-based standards for data collection, use, sharing, archiving and deletion

Strategies

- i. Identify major regional and infrastructural gaps in digital innovation, literacy, and access.
- ii. Invest in building robust digital infrastructure, such as high-speed internet connectivity, broadband networks, and mobile networks, especially in rural areas.
- iii. Promote digital literacy programs specifically targeted to women to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to leverage digital technologies to advance their economic opportunities.
- iv. Encourage the development of digital skills for women-owned businesses, including training programs and mentorship opportunities to help them effectively leverage digital technologies to grow and scale their businesses.
- v. Emphasize the importance of women's participation in the digital economy by promoting entrepreneurship, creating policies that support women-owned businesses, and providing access to incubation centres and innovation hubs.
- vi. Prioritize gender diversity in the technology sector by creating policies that support women’s participation in digital education and encouraging the hiring and promotion of women in technology companies and start-ups.
- vii. Create digital innovation programs to support women-owned startups and innovation hubs through funding, mentorship, and access to infrastructure to allow digital entrepreneurs to thrive.

3.1.4 Macroeconomic and Fiscal Policy Environment Affecting the Implementation of the BPfA

Macroeconomic policies are crucial to women's economic empowerment and gender equality in Nigeria because they shape the economic environment. However, gender planning has often been at the periphery of the macro-policy framework in Nigeria. This affects the decentralisation of the mandate for gender equality and especially affects budgetary allocation. The implementation of gender equality programmes will be based on gender mainstreaming into all policy spaces in the country's social, economic, political and cultural spaces. Hence, it is important that the operational macroeconomic framework and any other macro-planning framework of the country entrenches gender planning in order to positively impact the implementation of the BPfA. A lack of empirical basis for gender planning in Nigeria has been seen as a problem for policy sustainability. Absence of an integrated structure for obtaining gender statistics and other relevant information as baseline reports to strengthen gender policy development has hampered the seriousness with which gender planning should have been regarded. Although feeble attempts have been made especially within the reform programme of the National Bureau of Statistics, the existing framework is grossly inadequate and shows a low level of understanding of the dimensions of gender that need to be captured in policy and through regular status reporting.

In enhancing progress towards gender inequality and women's economic empowerment, Nigeria's macro-environment needs to increasingly encourage:

- **Gender-responsive policies:** these include tax reforms, social protection systems, and initiatives to increase women's participation in green economies.
- **Affirmative procurement:** affirmative procurement policies and laws to support women-owned businesses.
- **Equal pay:** employers can be certified for equal pay, which requires them to have a transparent system for rewarding additional skills and experiences.
- **Addressing health and education challenges:** This includes providing infrastructure like sanitation facilities and electricity and combating violence against women and girls.

The government of Nigeria, headed by His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR in its determination to meet the overarching objectives of this Session's theme which aims at accelerating the full and effective implementation of the various women frameworks and sustainable development goals agenda 2030 has created economic structures and infrastructures to facilitate investments and contribute to job creation for the teeming young population especially women. The government's Renewed Hope Agenda is defined by its commitment to unleashing the country's full economic potential, by focusing on job creation, access to capital for small and large businesses, inclusiveness, the rule of law, and the fight against hunger, poverty and corruption.

Investing in women's economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. The economic empowerment of women thus contributes to the development of human capital and human capabilities, including their own development. Studies have shown that, when women earn an income and control their

earnings, their children are more likely to attend school, their families are healthier, their self-worth improves, and their household incomes grow-along with the global economy.

In realization of this, the current renewed hope administration mantra has been to change the narrative with special attention paid to bringing succour to vulnerable women through strategic programme of sustainable empowerment, training and skills acquisition alongside traditional awareness creation and campaign programme.

In specific terms, Nigeria has been able to undertake following policy interventions amongst others:

- i. Development of a Women Advancement Blue print on Changing the narratives to accelerate Ministry's realization of its vision, goal and mandate;
- ii. Procurement of machines/equipment for women empowerment to boost income, reduce drudgery, support recreation activities and good health for women (Garri processing machines, Fish dryer, Rice Milling machines, Sewing Machines etc);
- iii. Commissioning of Pink Riders for women to eke out a living and ease transportation within the FCT suburbs;
- iv. Community Engagement in farming to boost women's income, food security and rural peace.

Some other strategies designed to harness and provide social protection for the Nigeria's vulnerable female population include:

- i. The Federal government-led **Social Protection Policy** has three main programme:
 - the conditional cash transfer In Care of the People (COPE) is targeted at households with specific social categories - those with children of school age, female-headed or those who are elderly, physically challenged, fistula or HIV/AIDS patients;
 - the health fee waiver for pregnant women and children under five and
 - the National and Community-based health insurance scheme.
- ii. The establishment of an enabling coordinating instrument encapsulated in the **National Gender and the Women Economic Empowerment Policies** whose goal is to bridge gender gaps, explore and fully harness women's human capital assets as drivers of national growth and development;
- iii. The government also achieved great success in the **financial inclusion efforts** by bringing in:
 - the extremely poor women in the hinterlands into the formal banking system and loan schemes;
 - Many women now operate bank accounts and Point of Sale (POS) businesses.
- iv. Subsidy empowerment scheme, launched by the present administration to provide relief to its citizens particularly women and youths from the unusual rise in goods prices due to subsidy removal.
- v. The government establishment of the **Development Bank of Nigeria (DBN)** to provide sustainable financing to Small and Medium Scale Enterprises.

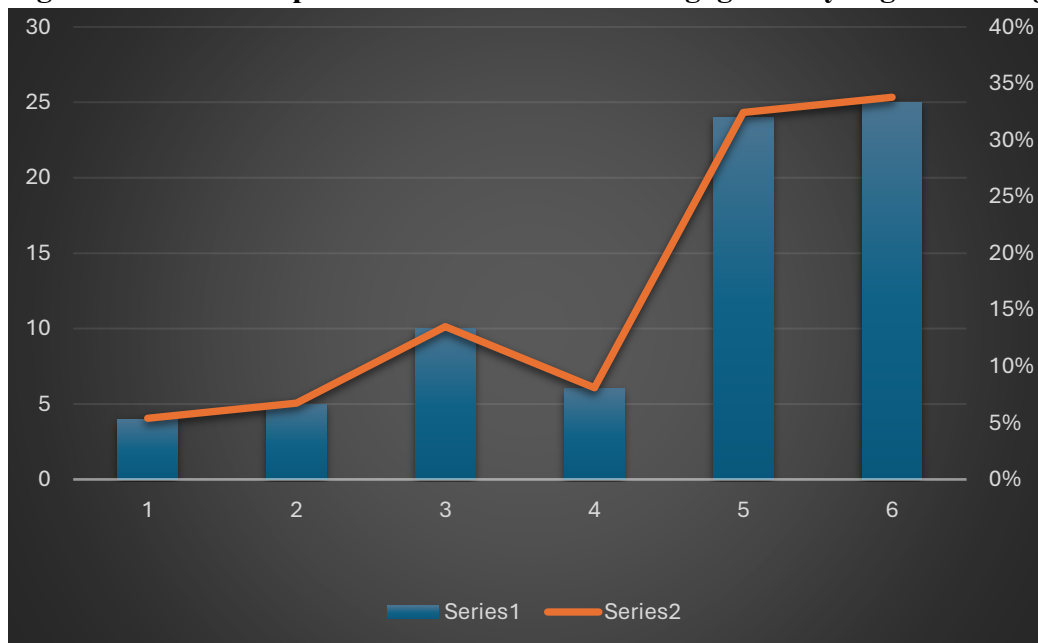
- vi. The **Agricultural Revolutionary Policy 2016 - 2020** has boosted agricultural activities and created 5 million dignified jobs with decent pay for Women and Youth.
- vii. The imperative to focus on improving performance towards financial literacy, collections, and overall financial inclusion in the country with support from the World Bank, birthed **Nigeria for Women Project** established to directly impact about 500,000 women beneficiaries. The Project supports improved livelihoods for women with its four components:
 - Building Social Capital,
 - Livelihoods Program,
 - Innovations and Partnerships,
 - Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Learning.

The project is currently being remodelled and scaled up to include the other 30 states of the federation with a World Bank-supported loan of \$ 540 million USD over the next 5 years.

vii). The Launch of the Inclusive **Basic Service Delivery Livelihood Empowerment Integrated Programme** worth \$ 258 million to provide a comprehensive multi-sectoral intervention to bolster rehabilitation efforts in North-Eastern Nigeria. Under the programme:

- **14 million people including 2.3 million** internal displaced persons (IDPs) will benefit from health, nutrition, education, water, and sanitation services;
- **9,000** IDPs and heads of vulnerable households will receive direct economic assistance;
- **2,023** small and medium-scale enterprises (about **79%** women) will receive business development support;
- **2,900** construction artisans and mechanics in the informal sector will also get help to improve their productivity.

Figure 2: Gender-responsive social innovations engaged in by Nigeria during COVID-19



Source, Survey, 2024

3.2 Poverty eradication, social protection, and social services

3.2.1 Actions to Reduce/Eradicate Poverty among Women and Girls

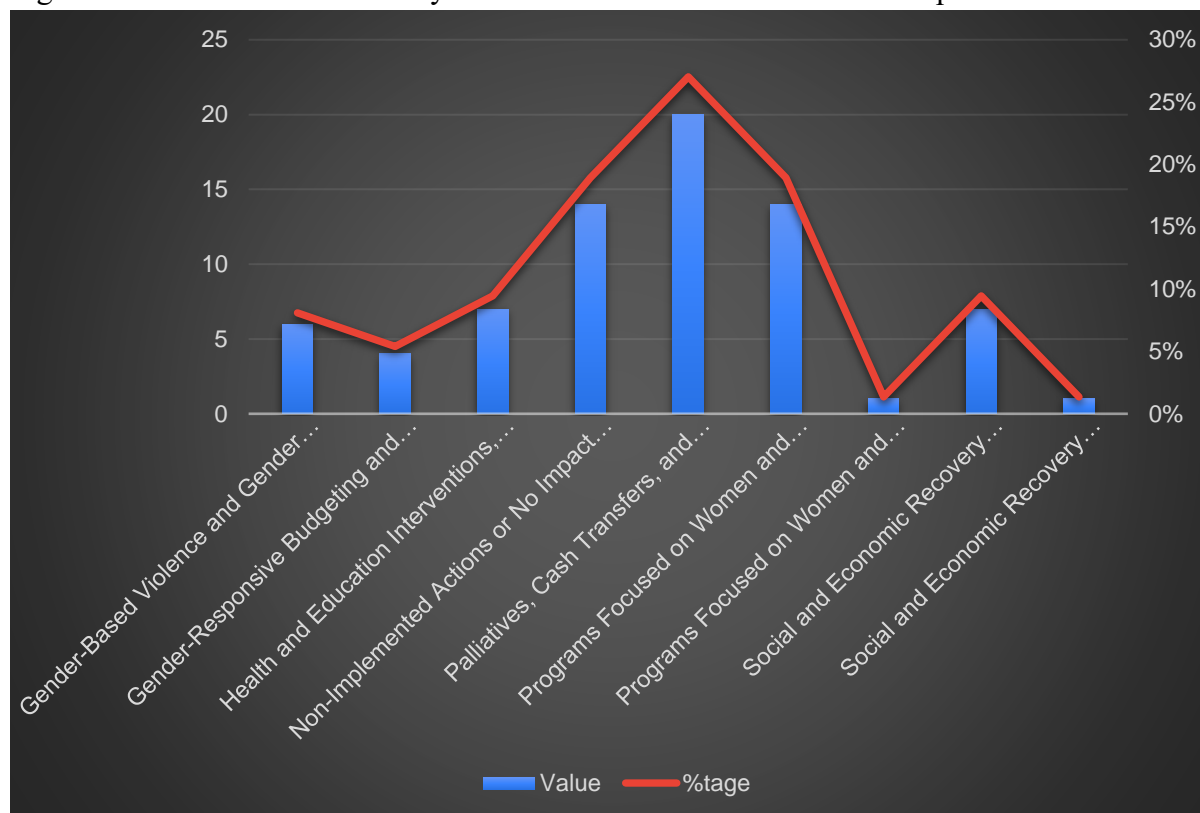
In the past five years, Nigeria has implemented several targeted measures to reduce poverty among women and girls. These initiatives, primarily funded and coordinated by federal, state, and local government bodies alongside non-governmental organizations, address financial inclusion, skill acquisition, and health. The initiatives have supported women's entrepreneurship, and business development activities as well as introduced in some areas and strengthened in others social protection programmes for women and girls. There has been provision of job and skills training and broader access to finance. The following narrative summarizes three significant examples of these interventions, with emphasis on their aims, scope, target populations, budgets, evaluations, and lessons learned. Where available, the report includes actions for marginalized groups and provide data to support the impact of these measures.

a. Government Enterprise and Empowerment Program (GEEP)

The Government Enterprise and Empowerment Program (GEEP) was launched under Nigeria's Social Investment Program (SIP) to provide financial inclusion and empowerment to women, small-scale traders, and artisans. GEEP aims to provide microcredit to women entrepreneurs who face barriers to accessing traditional loans, empowering them with resources to scale their businesses. GEEP focuses on economically disadvantaged women across Nigeria, with particular attention to rural areas, as well as widows, young women, and female heads of households. Through GEEP, specific programs like MarketMoni, FarmerMoni, and TraderMoni have been designed to reach low-income women operating in informal markets and low-income communities. According to the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, GEEP has allocated billions of naira annually. The Bank of Industry is vested with the responsibility to manage the fund on behalf of the Federal Government and to disburse the funds to the target population. Under the Bank of Industry, there are also women-focused funds that promote gender equality and female empowerment within and outside our organization by building capacity and providing financial support for Female Entrepreneurs

GEEP reported that as of 2023, over 2 million micro-loans had been disbursed to beneficiaries, with 70% of recipients being women. Evaluations show that recipients report a 30% increase in their business revenue on average, which has supported household-level poverty reduction and improved access to food and education for children (Businessday 2019, 2020)

Figure 3: Actions in the last five years to achieve women's economic empowerment



Source: Survey, 2024

b. Nigeria for Women Project (NFWP)

The Nigeria for Women Project (NFWP) is a World Bank-funded initiative launched in 2020 in collaboration with the Nigerian government. The NFWP seeks to improve the socio-economic outcomes of women by enhancing access to skills, finances, and social capital. It also fosters community-driven women's groups to support their socio-economic empowerment. The NFWP primarily targets rural and low-income women, particularly in states such as Abia, Kebbi, Niger, Ogun, and Taraba, focusing on gender equity in economic empowerment. The NFWP project had an estimated budget of \$100 million for its multi-year rollout, with a significant portion allocated to grants, capacity building, and community mobilization (AIR.ORG, 2022). Early impact assessments suggest that NFWP has benefited over 200,000 women by increasing their income through skills development and group savings programs called "Women Affinity Group (WAG) where women can access loan. Women who participated in these programs reported a 50% increase in their average household income. NFWP's group savings and loan structures are also improving financial literacy and resilience among women. Key lessons from NFWP include the importance of integrating local customs and community structures to ensure program acceptance and effectiveness. Additionally, periodic feedback from beneficiaries helps refine program delivery, especially concerning the unique challenges faced by marginalized groups, such as widows and single mothers.

The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program aims to alleviate poverty among Nigeria's most vulnerable households by providing cash incentives conditional on health and education-

related activities. Targeted women, especially caregivers of young children, receive these transfers on the condition that children are enrolled in school and participate in regular health check-ups. The CCT program targets women-led households in vulnerable communities nationwide, focusing on states in the northern region where poverty rates are higher, and women have limited access to economic opportunities. Annual allocations for the CCT program are part of Nigeria's Social Investment Program budget. Independent evaluations of the CCT program have shown that the cash transfers significantly improved the nutritional and health status of children in beneficiary households, with over 50% of recipients reporting improved access to education. The program is noted to reduce financial stress and empower women as primary household decision-makers.

3.2.2 Actions to Improve Access to Social Protection for Women and Girls

In the past five years, Nigeria has taken several key steps to improve access to social protection for women and girls, guided by international frameworks such as the Beijing Platform for Action and reinforced by the country's National Gender Policy. These actions aim to address the gendered nature of poverty, promote economic security, and provide protection against socio-economic vulnerabilities.

a. Policy Initiatives and Legislative Reforms

- National Social Investment Program (NSIP): Established by the federal government, NSIP has become a foundational program aimed at poverty alleviation and promoting social inclusion. Programs under NSIP, such as the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) and Government Enterprise and Empowerment Program (GEEP), prioritize women as primary beneficiaries. The CCT provides cash transfers to poor and vulnerable households, particularly those led by women, with additional incentives to encourage girls' education (Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, 2021).
- Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP): The domestication of the VAPP Act in various Nigerian states has expanded protections for women against gender-based violence. This legislative framework has played a critical role in ensuring that survivors of gender-based violence have access to financial and legal support, which aligns with the broader objectives of social protection (Ushie et al., 2020).
- National Gender Policy, 2021-2026: Updated and implemented as part of Nigeria's commitment to international gender rights frameworks, the National Gender Policy outlines provisions to expand women's access to resources, credit, and economic programs. It further addresses the need for special social protection initiatives targeted at women living in poverty, those with disabilities, and female-headed households (National Gender Policy, 2021).

b. Economic Empowerment Programs

- Women's Micro-Grant Initiatives: Microfinance programs and grant schemes have targeted low-income women, particularly those in rural and underserved areas. Through partnerships with NGOs and financial institutions, these programs help women access

small loans to start or expand businesses. This not only provides immediate financial relief but also contributes to longer-term economic stability and independence (Fayomi et al., 2022).

- National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS): Nigeria's NHIS has taken steps to extend affordable health insurance to women, especially those in low-income groups. In addition to reducing out-of-pocket expenses for healthcare, the scheme incorporates maternal and child health services, which are essential for the well-being of women and girls (World Health Organization, 2021).

c. Education and Skills Development Programmes

- Girls' Education Initiative and Scholarships: Recognizing the impact of education on economic security, the government has expanded scholarship programmes for girls, particularly in STEM fields, and incentivized enrolment in secondary education. Additionally, organizations like the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Plan International have collaborated with the government on projects targeting girls from marginalized communities, providing them with both financial and material support (UNICEF, 2023).
- Vocational Training Programmes for Women: Various state and national initiatives have aimed to enhance women's economic resilience by providing vocational training. These programmes focus on sectors such as agriculture, tailoring, and tech, equipping women with the skills needed to earn sustainable incomes and access social insurance (Nigerian Economic Summit Group, 2022).

d. Targeted Support for Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups

- Support for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): Nigeria's social protection measures have incorporated targeted programmes for internally displaced women and girls, particularly in regions affected by insurgency. Through partnerships with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), support includes access to food, shelter, healthcare, and psycho-social services (International Organization for Migration, 2022).
- Women Living with Disabilities: Initiatives under the Disability Rights Act (2019) and related programmes have been designed to protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities. These programmes aim to ensure their inclusion in social protection schemes, including education subsidies and healthcare benefits tailored to meet their specific needs (Disability Rights Advocacy Center, 2020).

e. Health and Reproductive Rights Initiatives

- Maternal and Child Health Programmes: The federal and state governments have increased investments in maternal and child healthcare, including providing free antenatal and postnatal care in many public hospitals. This reduces financial barriers for low-income women and girls, especially in rural communities where access to healthcare is limited (Federal Ministry of Health, 2021).

- Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Services: In collaboration with organizations such as UNFPA and WHO, the Nigerian government has expanded access to sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning and contraception. This not only empowers women to make informed choices but also contributes to social protection by improving their economic stability (UNFPA, 2021).

f. Digital Access and Financial Inclusion

- Digital Financial Inclusion Initiatives: With the increased digitalization of services, Nigeria has implemented programmes to promote financial inclusion for women, focusing on mobile banking and financial literacy for rural women. The Central Bank of Nigeria has introduced policies to enhance access to digital financial services, recognizing that financial independence is critical to women's social protection (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2022).
- Bank Verification Number (BVN) Initiative: To enhance access to financial services and social protection benefits, the BVN initiative has helped ensure that women in rural and informal sectors can open bank accounts and receive benefits directly (Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System, 2021).

3.2.3 Actions to Improve Health Outcomes for Women and Girls

a. National Health Policy and Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF) The BHCPF aims to strengthen primary health care and enhance access to services for underserved populations, particularly women and children. This initiative has several concrete measures and strategies such as the implementation of the BHCPF to enhance primary healthcare services and nationwide training programmes for healthcare providers to improve service delivery at primary healthcare centres. Primarily focused on women and children, especially in rural and underserved urban areas.

The BHCPF received a significant funding boost, aiming for 1% of the consolidated revenue fund, translating to approximately NGN 50 billion annually. Preliminary reports indicate improvements in maternal and child health service utilization, evidenced by increased antenatal care visits and skilled birth attendance. Effective collaboration with local government authorities is essential for mobilizing resources and ensuring community engagement.

b. Maternal and Child Health Programmes

In efforts to address high mortality rates, Nigeria has introduced specific maternal and child health programmes: Accelerated Reduction of Maternal and Newborn Mortality in Nigeria an initiative that introduced guidelines focusing on emergency obstetric care and neonatal health. Also, the Nigeria Every Newborn Action Plan with interventions targeted such as newborn resuscitation training and community health outreach programmes have been implemented. Nationally funded initiatives and partnerships with organizations like UNICEF have contributed approximately NGN 20 billion to these programmes over the past five years. This has improved community involvement and education which is seen to be crucial for ensuring the uptake of services.

Further Information: More information on maternal and child health initiatives can be accessed via Health.gov.ng.

c. Family Planning and Reproductive Health Services

Recognizing the importance of family planning, Nigeria has launched initiatives to improve reproductive health outcomes. Nigeria Family Planning Blueprint (2020-2024) programme promotes access to contraceptive methods through public awareness campaigns and training for health care providers. The Community-Based Family Planning Initiatives have been implemented to train community health workers to deliver family planning services directly in communities. Approximately NGN 10 billion has been allocated for family planning initiatives in collaboration with international partners. Reports indicate a 10% increase in contraceptive prevalence rates in regions where community-based services have been established. Lessons from these initiatives reveal that addressing cultural barriers and misconceptions about family planning is vital for service acceptance.

d. Comprehensive Actions to Improve Health Outcomes for Women and Girls (2019-2024)

Over the past five years, Nigeria has implemented several key actions to enhance health outcomes for women and girls:

- **Data Collection and Analysis:** The 2023–24 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) was initiated to gather vital health indicators, including maternal and child health, fertility, family planning, and early childhood mortality.
- **Maternal and Child Health:**
 - Increased access to antenatal care from skilled providers, promoting at least four Ante-Natal Clinic visits.
 - Improved delivery care with a higher number of births attended by skilled providers.
 - Enhanced postnatal care for mothers and newborns.
 - Focused interventions for maternal malaria prevention and treatment during pregnancy.
- **Family Planning and Reproductive Health:** Increased women's participation in decision-making regarding contraceptive use and reproductive health care.
- **Child Health and Nutrition:**
 - Monitoring of child nutritional status and promotion of optimal feeding practices.
 - Increased vaccination coverage, including the introduction of the rotavirus vaccine.
 - Initiatives aimed at addressing early childhood mortality and improving immunization rates.
- **Malaria Prevention and Treatment:**
 - Promotion of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) usage and implementation of Intermittent Preventive Treatment (IPT) during pregnancy.
- **Chronic Disease Management:** Screening and treatment programmes for hypertension and diabetes among women and men.

These comprehensive actions reflect Nigeria's commitment to improving health outcomes for women and girls through data-driven policies, enhanced healthcare services, and targeted health interventions.

3.2.4 Actions to Improve Education Outcomes and Skills for Women and Girls

Over the past five years, Nigeria has implemented various measures aimed at enhancing education outcomes and skills for women and girls. These initiatives focus on addressing barriers to education, promoting gender equity, and increasing women's participation in underrepresented sectors, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

a. National Policy on Gender in Education (2020)

The National Policy on Gender in Education, launched in 2020, aims to promote gender equity in educational access and outcomes. This policy includes strategies for increasing female enrolment in STEM fields and vocational training programmes. The policy primarily targets girls and women in primary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions, particularly in rural and underserved communities. While specific budget allocations for this policy are not detailed, it is part of the broader education sector budget, which has been supported by both federal and state governments through various initiatives. Available evidence indicates an increase in female enrolment in STEM programmes, with reported growth rates of about 15% in the last academic year as a result of the implementation of the National policy on gender in education. (Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Challenges remain in implementation, particularly regarding cultural resistance in certain regions. Continued advocacy and community engagement are essential for overcoming these barriers.

It is worth mentioning too that Nigeria now has over 10 Federal Universities, six State Universities, and four Private Universities in the country that have established Gender Policies to promote gender equality and advance the rights of women and girls. About 26 Universities now have Centres for Gender Studies across Nigeria, with the Directors of the Centres, meeting regularly for coordination and exchange of ideas. These are now resource centres for states where they exist.

b. Girl Education Project (GEP) Phase 3

The Girl Education Project (GEP) Phase 3, funded by the UK government through the Department for International Development (DFID), aims to improve access to quality education for girls in northern Nigeria. The project focuses on reducing barriers to education, enhancing educational quality, and improving retention rates. The project primarily targets adolescent girls aged 10-19, particularly those in conflict-affected areas of Northern Nigeria. The GEP Phase 3 has a budget of approximately £25 million, implemented over five years, to cover various educational interventions UNICEF 2023). Impact assessments have shown a 20% increase in school enrolment and a 30% improvement in retention rates for girls in project areas (DFID, 2023).

c. STEM Girls Initiative (2022)

Launched in 2022, the STEM Girls Initiative aims to increase the number of girls participating in STEM fields through mentorship programmes, scholarships, and partnerships with technology companies. The initiative includes workshops, coding camps, and competitions to spark interest in STEM careers. The initiative targets girls aged 12-18 from urban and rural areas, with a particular focus on those from low-income backgrounds. The initiative is funded through partnerships with both governmental and non-governmental organizations. Evaluation reports indicate that participation in STEM activities has increased girls' interest in pursuing STEM-related courses by 40% and led to a 25% increase in scholarships awarded to female students in STEM programmes (International Women in STEM, 2023).

Further Information: More details about this initiative can be accessed through the [STEM Girls Initiative website](#).

3.2.5 Actions to ensure economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic closes gender gaps in poverty, employment, social protection, education, and/or health

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing gender inequalities in Nigeria, with women disproportionately affected in terms of poverty, employment, social protection, education, and health. In response, several innovative measures were implemented over the past five years to promote economic recovery while specifically targeting gender gaps. This report highlights three significant innovations: the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), the Women Empowerment and Livelihood Support (WELS) program, and the SheTrades Initiative.

a. National Social Investment Programme (NSIP)

The NSIP was designed to provide social safety nets for vulnerable populations, including women, through various schemes such as the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme and the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP). The CCT program specifically targeted households with vulnerable women, providing monthly cash transfers to enhance their financial stability. The programme primarily aimed at poor and vulnerable households, particularly focusing on women as primary beneficiaries to alleviate poverty and support their families. The Nigerian government allocates resources to NSIP through its various Ministries and agencies, emphasizing its commitment to addressing social inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic. Studies indicated that households receiving CCT reported improved food security and reduced poverty levels. A World Bank report (2022) noted a significant decrease in poverty rates among women-led households participating in the programme.

b. Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Policy

The WEE Policy was established to promote gender equality and empower women economically by ensuring their full participation in the economy. The policy focuses on enhancing access to resources, skills development, and improving women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels. The WEE Policy targets women in various sectors, particularly those in informal and rural economies, as well as women entrepreneurs seeking to expand their businesses. The Nigerian government, in collaboration with international partners, allocates resources to support the implementation of the WEE Policy, including funding for

training programmes and microfinance initiatives. Research conducted by the development Research and Project Centre (dRPC) on the proposed 2023 budget, showed that WEE received an allocation of over N51 billion in 2021, N103 billion in 2022, and N58 billion in 2023, which is about 56% in reduction compared to the previous year. An evaluation conducted by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs in 2023 reported that the WEE Policy has facilitated the training of over 200,000 women in vocational and entrepreneurial skills, leading to an increase in female-led businesses by 25% in targeted regions. A significant lesson from the implementation of the WEE Policy was the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration, involving government, private sector, and civil society organizations to create a supportive ecosystem for women's economic empowerment.

c. SheTrades Initiative

The SheTrades Initiative, launched in Nigeria in 2020, aims to connect women entrepreneurs to international markets by providing training, access to finance, and networking opportunities. The initiative supports the growth of women-led businesses and enhances their participation in trade. This initiative specifically targets women entrepreneurs across various sectors, including agriculture, fashion, and technology, focusing on those with limited access to resources and markets. Funded through international partnerships, including the International Trade Centre (ITC), the European Union, UNIDO, and the Federal Government of Nigeria. A report published by the ITC in 2023 highlighted that participant increased their revenue by an average of 30% within the first year of engagement with the SheTrades programme. Furthermore, the initiative has successfully connected over 5,000 women entrepreneurs to global markets. ([ITC She Trades Nigeria Hub - NEPC](#))

3.3 Freedom from Violence, Stigma and Stereotypes

3.3.1 Forms of Gender-Based Violence Prioritised for Action

Over the past five years, Nigeria has prioritized several forms of gender-based violence (GBV) for action. Nigeria considers these areas priorities due to their high prevalence rates, societal impacts, and the vulnerability of women and girls affected by these forms of violence. IPV and domestic violence, for instance, are deeply entrenched in patriarchal norms and societal acceptance of male dominance, which necessitates targeted legal and social responses. Practices like FGM and child marriage persist due to cultural traditions. These areas of priority include:

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) has been a pervasive issue in Nigeria, where cultural norms, religious beliefs, and traditional values often perpetuate gender inequality; Sexual violence and marital rape have been especially challenging to combat due to legal gaps and societal silence around these issues (UN Women, 2024); domestic violence which often extends beyond intimate partner violence, including abuse by extended family members, in-laws, or other household members. These dynamics are reinforced by patriarchal social structures, which allow for the control and coercion of women within family settings. Sexual harassment has been rampant in Nigerian workplaces, schools, and public spaces, where power imbalances and

gender norms create environments ripe for exploitation. This issue gained widespread attention following media reports of sexual harassment in universities, particularly the "Sex for Grades" scandal (Adekeye et al,2020). The 2021 Social Norms Report indicated that up to 40% of Nigerian female students had experienced some form of sexual harassment. Despite new legislation, enforcement gaps remain, and cultural stigma around reporting persists. Technology-facilitated violence, including online harassment, stalking, and non-consensual sharing of intimate images, has grown with increased access to social media and mobile phones. In Nigeria, where digital access is expanding, the issue disproportionately affects women and girls. Also, child marriage remains a pressing issue, particularly in northern Nigeria, where poverty, cultural practices, and low educational attainment levels fuel the continuation of early marriages. These marriages often result in girls dropping out of school and experiencing health risks, including maternal mortality. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a harmful traditional practice that persists in many parts of Nigeria. According to a 2021 NDHS report, the national prevalence of FGM among women aged 15-49 stands at 20%. While there has been a steady decline in the practice, it remains prevalent in rural areas where community resistance is stronger.

Nigeria is a source, transit, and destination country when it comes to human trafficking. According to the 2018 Global Slavery Index (2018) Report, Nigeria ranks 32/167 of the countries with the highest number of slaves (1,386,000). According to the National Agency for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons, (NAPTIP) the average age of trafficked children in Nigeria is 15. NAPTIP has continually prioritized prevention and response to trafficking in persons. NAPTIP partnered with the National Centre for Women Development to establish skills acquisition centres for formerly trafficked women and girls who are rescued/deported and returned to Nigeria. These centres are present in each of the 36 states and the FCT. NAPTIP continues to partner with agencies such as UNICEF and UN Women to carry out public advocacy campaigns to improve public awareness around human trafficking generally, and its implications for women and girls within the context of national development. The offender's register set up to name and shame sex offenders and traffickers is still operating. This is meant to reduce the menace of human trafficking and sex slavery.

Despite the increasing forms of GBV against women in politics, this has not been a priority to the Nigerian state and not enough attention is being paid to GBV in conflict areas. The 2023 general elections in Nigeria witnessed a high level of violence against female candidates. Reports from groups like the *International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA)* and women's platforms like "Womanifesto" documented incidents of violence, intimidation, and harassment. For example, women running for office were threatened with violence, disqualified from party processes through irregularities, or had their campaigns disrupted by male political actors. Cases of political violence against women are underreported due to fear of stigma and backlash.

3.3.2 Priority Actions to Address Gender-Based Violence

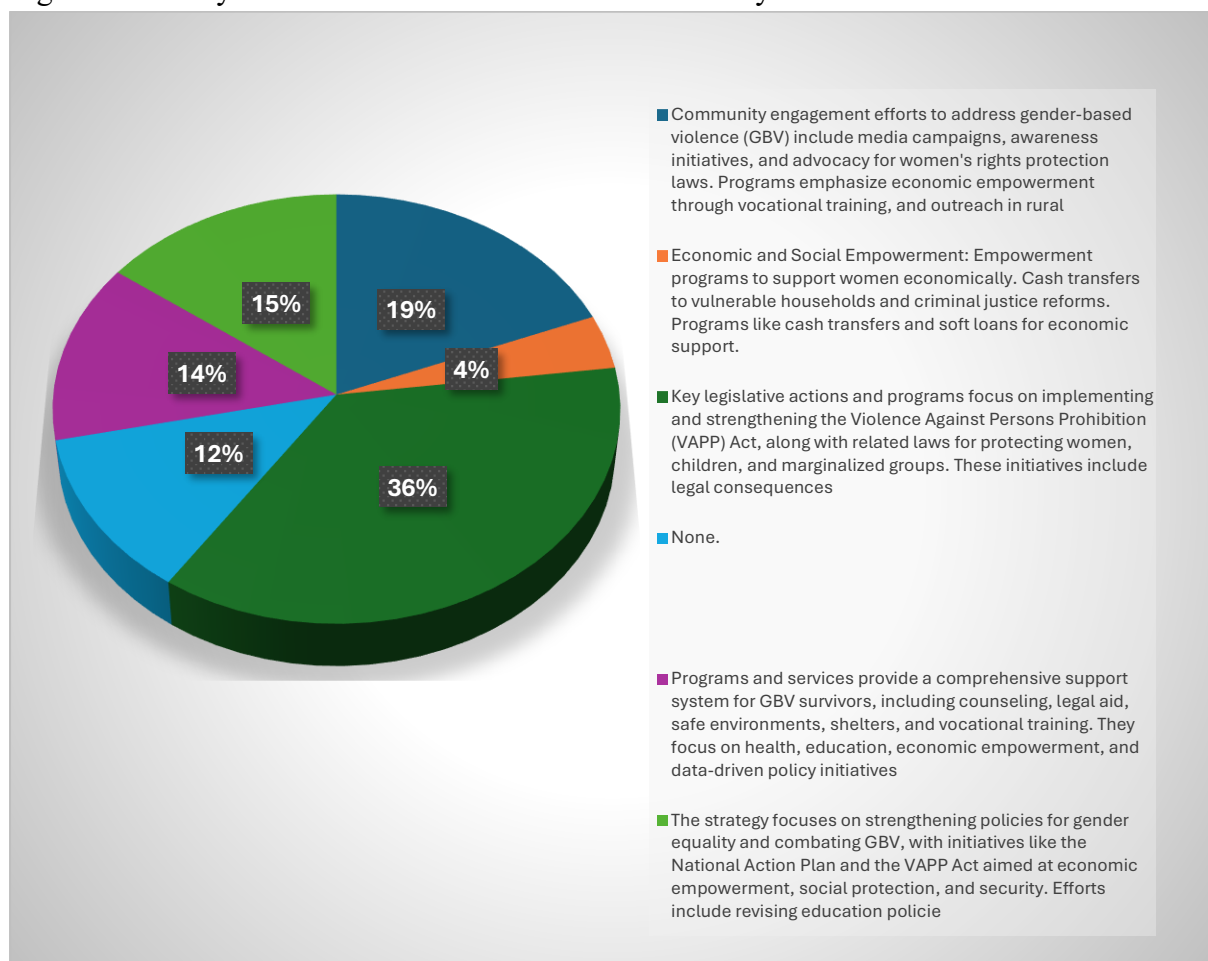
1. Legal Reforms and Law Enforcement

Although enacted earlier, there has been increased momentum in the past five years to expand the implementation of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) (2015) across more Nigerian states. About 15% of the respondents who participated in the survey identified the increased adoption of the VAPP by states as the single most important priority action to address GBV over the last five years. See Figure 4 below. As of 2023, 35 out of 36 states have domesticated the VAPP Act, with efforts ongoing to strengthen enforcement. The law criminalizes various forms of GBV, including rape, domestic violence, harmful traditional practices, and sexual harassment. The aim is to provide legal protection for victims of violence and enhance punishment for perpetrators. There are still a lot of gaps here in terms of inadequacy and timeliness. The DSVAs cannot meet up with demands.

2. National Action Plans (NAPs) on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

The National Gender Policy (2021-2026): This updated policy emphasizes gender equity and includes specific strategies for preventing and addressing GBV. One key component is the integration of GBV prevention into Nigeria’s education, health, and social service sectors. The objective is to provide a comprehensive framework for gender equality and ensure the mainstreaming of GBV prevention across all government sectors. The NGP is comprehensive and covers all aspects of GBV as relates to the country.

Figure 4: Priority Actions to Address GBV in the last five years.



Source: Survey, 2024

3. Women's Access to Justice

Establishment of Sexual Offences Courts: In Lagos and other states, specialist courts for handling sexual offences have been established to expedite the adjudication of GBV cases. These courts aim to reduce delays and ensure survivors receive timely justice. The aim is to provide a streamlined judicial process for GBV survivors, ensuring timely and sensitive handling of cases. Since their establishment, the courts have reportedly seen faster case resolution times. However, nationwide coverage remains limited, and rural access remains a challenge.

Beyond the VAPP Act, state-level initiatives, such as the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team (DSVRT) which was established to address domestic violence and provide resources to victims, have been upgraded into a full agency in September 2021 and renamed "Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) with an expanded mandate and with a full budget from the state government. This transition was aimed at expanding the mandate of the original DSVRT to better address domestic and sexual violence in the state. However, the justice system personnel still have limited training to handle gender issues, and most are not conversant with current laws and provisions. Also, there is a low number of prosecutions or sanctions recorded.

The federal government has also supported the establishment of gender desks within police stations to facilitate reporting and investigation of domestic violence cases.

4. Support Services for Survivors of Violence

Helplines and Shelters: Several states, have introduced 24-hour helplines and expanded the number of shelters for survivors of violence. Shelters provide emergency housing, legal assistance, and access to counselling and health services. the aim is to provide comprehensive support for GBV survivors, enabling their recovery and reintegration into society. There has been an increase in the number of Sexual Assault and Referral Centres (SARCs) across the country. These were supported by development partners and some state governments. A lot of gaps still exist in the area of effective running and funding for these Centres, but they are established and available. The numbers of SARCs available are totally inadequate. Lots of the SARCs are not adequately funded or equipped. Some do not have the personnel to handle cases and most are lying fallow and unable to respond to cases. The issue of shelters is something government has not paid adequate attention to.

5. Preventive Strategies

Various CSOs have partnered with the government to implement programmes aimed at challenging harmful gender norms. The HeforShe Campaign, for example, focuses on engaging men as allies in the fight against GBV. Additionally, educational programmes in schools aim to foster gender-equitable attitudes among boys from a young age. Media campaigns, including radio and TV spots, have been launched to raise awareness about GBV, targeting both urban and rural populations. For example, the Spotlight Initiative, a partnership between the EU and the UN, prioritized the prevention of VAWG through community engagement.

3.3.3 Strategies to Prevent Gender-Based Violence

Over the past five years, Nigeria has employed various strategies to prevent GBV, with a focus on empowering women and girls, engaging communities, and promoting equitable attitudes. Some of the key strategies and examples include:

1. Working with Men, Women, and Couples: Interpersonal Skills & Conflict Management: Programmes have been introduced to improve interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, and shared decision-making. An example cited out of many others is the "Men Engage Nigeria" initiative, which targets men and boys to promote positive masculinities and non-violent conflict resolution in families. This initiative is run by the Society for Family Health and partners like UN Women and has shown positive outcomes in changing perceptions of gender roles.

2. Empowering Women and Girls: Economic Independence and Access to Resources through "National Women Empowerment Fund" and "Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP)" are two initiatives targeted at empowering women economically. GEEP provides women with access to credit facilities, which in turn enables economic independence, reducing vulnerability to GBV. As part of the National Gender Policy (2021-2026), this aligns with empowering women economically to foster household equity. GEEP had a budget allocation of NGN 140 billion (approximately USD 340 million) to provide microloans to women and vulnerable groups in the past five years.

3. Alleviating Poverty through Targeted Interventions: Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programmes like the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) aim to alleviate poverty in households by providing financial assistance, especially to women. These interventions directly impact GBV by reducing economic pressures that often fuel conflict and violence within households. Over 1.6 million poor and vulnerable households were targeted for cash transfers by 2022, with a significant focus on rural women.

4. Creating Safe Environments: Initiatives like "Girls Safe Spaces" under the "Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment" (AGILE) provide safe environments for girls in schools to prevent sexual harassment and early marriage. This project, led by the Federal Ministry of Education and funded by the World Bank, aims to support 12 million adolescent girls. The focus is on northern states where child marriage rates are high, including Kano, Kaduna, and Katsina. The project had a budget of USD 500 million, with a portion dedicated to creating and maintaining these safe spaces.

5. Promoting Non-Violent Family Relationships: Through programs such as "Raising Voices," Nigeria has focused on promoting positive parenting practices. The "Parenting for Lifelong Health" initiative, supported by UNICEF and the Nigerian Ministry of Health, encourages non-violent discipline and positive interactions within families. This initiative primarily targets parents and caregivers in low-income and rural areas.

6. Promoting Positive Gender-Equitable Attitudes: The "HeForShe" Campaign led by UN Women Nigeria mobilized men to take a stand for gender equality. This campaign also includes extensive public awareness efforts to reshape attitudes toward gender roles and promote equity in the home, workplace, and public life. Over 60,000 men and boys have participated in workshops and public campaigns, and the programme's evaluation shows a shift in attitudes among participants toward more gender-equitable values. Through various partnerships and collaborations including with traditional/religious leaders, Nigeria has made strides in challenging harmful gender norms that perpetuate violence.

8. Raising Public Awareness: there have been sustained efforts in raising awareness of GBV and calling for zero tolerance to GBV by both government and civil society actors. The Spotlight Initiative—a global multi-year partnership between the European Union and the United Nations—has had a major role in raising awareness around GBV in Nigeria. It involves nationwide campaigns, the production of radio and television content, and community outreach programmes to challenge GBV norms. The Spotlight Initiative received a total budget of EUR 250 million for Africa, with a significant portion allocated to Nigeria.

3.3.4 Actions to Prevent and Respond to Technology Amplified Gender-Based Violence

In Nigeria, technology-amplified gender-based violence (GBV), such as online sexual harassment, stalking, and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, has become a growing concern, particularly with the increased use of social media and digital platforms. In response, the Nigerian government, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders have implemented a range of actions aimed at preventing and responding to these forms of violence, with a focus on legal frameworks, data collection, public awareness, and protecting vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP Act) has been a significant piece of legislation in addressing technology-facilitated GBV in Nigeria. While the Act, passed in 2015, was not initially specific to online forms of abuse, it has been domesticated in several states, with provisions being extended to include technology-related offenses. For example, in Lagos State, laws have been strengthened to penalize the non-consensual sharing of intimate images (also known as "revenge porn") and cyberstalking, with prison sentences and fines attached to violations. Organizations like TechHer NG and SheLeadsAfrica have been at the forefront of awareness campaigns on ethical and responsible online behavior, focusing on the protection of women and girls. These initiatives have involved workshops, online campaigns, and collaborations with educational institutions to sensitize students, parents, and educators. For instance, TechHer NG's "Safe Online Spaces" campaign launched in 2020 aimed to educate young women on how to protect themselves from online harassment, report abuse, and navigate privacy settings effectively.

In 2021, the Nigerian government partnered with social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to develop stronger content moderation policies that protect women from online abuse. This includes the introduction of mechanisms for quicker reporting and the removal of harmful content, such as revenge porn and cyberstalking. Since the introduction of these mechanisms,

there has been a notable reduction in the time it takes for harmful content to be taken down from platforms.

3.3.5 Measures to Resource Women’s Organizations Working to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence

In the past five years, several key measures have been taken to resource women’s organizations working to prevent and respond to GBV in Nigeria, with a focus on increasing funding, expanding service provision, and empowering grassroots organizations. Organizations such as UN Women and the European Union have played significant roles in funding initiatives that support women’s rights and GBV prevention in Nigeria. For instance, the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, launched in 2019, has allocated over \$25 million to address GBV (UN Women, Global Citizen 2024). This funding has supported women's organizations to deliver critical services such as shelters, legal aid, and psychosocial support to survivors of violence. UN Women has consistently advocated for increased investment in evidence-based GBV prevention efforts, with a call for enhanced gender-responsive budgeting. Other development partners and donors have also funded several civil society organization-led initiatives across the country.

These initiatives primarily target vulnerable women and girls, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas of Nigeria. The focus includes survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, sexual violence against women with disabilities, and harmful traditional practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). State governments and other non-state actors have put in place collaborative strategies for the prevention of GBV which has intensified awareness creation through multimedia campaigns, and community mobilization through community-based methodologies such as community dialogues. An example is the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence which is commemorated at national and local government levels. This has proved to be a successful intervention in advocacy and awareness raising on pertinent issues of violence against women.

Over the past five years, there has been increased government commitment to resources for prevention and response to different forms of GBV. An example is the Lagos State DSVA which has been at the forefront of efforts to prevent GBV and has been a role model to other states in the country. Their key activities have included public awareness campaigns conducted widely, targeting various groups, including schools, communities, and workplaces; strengthening of legal and support systems for the effective enforcement of the law and ensuring survivors have access to support services; training and capacity strengthening of law enforcement, healthcare providers, and social workers to better handle GBV cases; collaborations with civil society organizations, religious leaders, and community influencers to strengthen preventive measures, and provision of survivor support services through a hotline to provide psychosocial, medical, and legal support for survivors of violence. In 2023, DSVA opened the “EKO HAVEN”, a shelter for Survivors of domestic violence. There has been a concerted effort to ensure coordinated responses to GBV incidents.

3.3.6 Actions to Address the Negative Portrayal of Women and Girls, Discrimination, and Gender Bias in the Media, including social media

To address the negative portrayal of women and girls, discrimination, and gender bias in the media, including social media, Nigeria has undertaken several actions in the past five years. There have been legal reforms and media regulation. In the past five years, one significant legal reform is the continued push for the domestication of the VAPP Act at the state level, which includes clauses addressing the portrayal of women in media and combating GBV. It seeks to protect women and girls from media content that promotes stereotypes and harmful images. While its enforcement remains a challenge in certain states, the VAPP Act is viewed as a legal tool to reduce media-based violence and discrimination.

Also, there has been an introduction of Media Regulation. The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) Regulations on Gender Portrayal in Media. NBC updated its Code of Practice to promote gender sensitivity in broadcast content, particularly addressing the stereotyping of women. To this end, there is increased monitoring of media content, though penalties for non-compliance remain limited.

There have been several CSO-inspired initiatives leading to media houses adopting voluntary codes of conduct to be more respectful and have a more accurate representation of women and girls. Examples of such initiatives include the Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) Media Campaign launched to collaborate with media houses to develop voluntary codes of conduct, and the WFM 91.7 (Women Radio) Nigeria's first and only radio station focused exclusively on promoting the rights and well-being of women in the past five years. The latter has played a critical role in addressing the negative portrayal of women, combating discrimination, and challenging gender bias in the media through a variety of actions including creating and broadcasting content that promote positive, empowering representations of women, and using its platform to engage listeners on the importance of gender equality in media narratives and the need for inclusive, respectful representations of women. "Let's Talk Gender" is an example of another such CSO-inspired initiative that raises awareness and calls for systemic changes in the way media portrays women. It has been a driving force in Nigeria's efforts to challenge the negative portrayal of women and girls in the media. This initiative is focused on ensuring that the media landscape in Nigeria is progressively becoming more inclusive and respectful of women's rights. Initial assessments indicated that media outlets are more aware of gender bias, though measurable improvements in media portrayals are still ongoing.

Some other similar initiatives inspired by CSOs seek to train media professionals on gender-sensitive reporting and production of media content, particularly on non-stereotypical, balanced representations of women and girls (UN Women Media Professional Training). The Female Journalists Leadership Programme by the Nigerian Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) promotes the leadership of women within the Nigerian media. This programme focuses on building the capacities of female journalists to take up leadership roles in media organizations. Over 200 female journalists have been trained since 2019, with some reporting improved confidence and increased leadership roles within their organizations. Training for

Media Professionals and media monitoring by several NGOs, including ActionAid Nigeria, monitor how marginalized groups, such as women with disabilities and rural women, are portrayed in the media, and advocate for inclusive and sensitive representation.

3.3.7 Actions to Address Violence against Marginalized Groups of Women and Girls

In the past five years, Nigeria has made some efforts to address violence against marginalized groups of women and girls through various policies, initiatives, and interventions. Below are some of the key actions taken:

1. Women with Disabilities

Implementation of the Disability Rights Law (2019) and specific programmes aimed at preventing violence against women with disabilities. The law seeks to protect the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs), ensuring their safety from violence and discrimination. Various programmes under the law, including sensitization campaigns and legal aid, target women with disabilities. The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) has allocated over NGN 200 million for public sensitization and support programmes in 2021 and 2022. Challenges remain, particularly in rural areas where services are scarce, and stigma is higher. Coordination with law enforcement is improving, but more training is needed.

Organizations such as the UNTF and the AWDF have supported integrating issues of women and girls with disabilities in the prevention and response to GBV in some states across the country. Civil society organizations have project activities targeted at prevention and response to violence against women with disabilities.

2. Girls and Adolescents (Child Marriage Prevention)

Strengthening of the Child Rights Act (CRA) and focused campaigns on the prevention of child marriage in Northern Nigeria. The campaign aims to eradicate child marriage, which disproportionately affects girls in rural and semi-urban areas of Northern Nigeria. Over NGN 500 million was allocated between 2019 and 2023 through partnerships between state governments, NGOs like Girls Not Brides, and international organizations such as UNICEF. Programmes have led to a 10% decrease in child marriages in some northern states, although enforcement remains a challenge. Cultural and religious beliefs still pose significant barriers to eradicating child marriage, necessitating more localized, community-based approaches.

3. Women in Humanitarian Settings (Internally Displaced Women)

Targeted interventions by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and humanitarian partners to address gender-based violence in IDP camps. To reduce sexual violence and provide psychosocial and legal support to women and girls in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, particularly in the northeastern region affected by Boko Haram. approximately NGN 400 million was allocated between 2020 and 2023 for GBV prevention programmes in IDP camps, funded by the NHRC and international donors. Reports from NHRC indicate that over 5,000 women received support services, though ongoing security concerns limit the scope of interventions. Addressing GBV in conflict settings requires robust coordination between security forces and humanitarian actors. More focus is needed on long-term rehabilitation and reintegration.

3.4 Participation, Accountability, and Gender-Responsive Institutions

3.4.1 Actions and Measures to Promote Women’s Participation in Public Life and Decision-Making

The revised National Gender Policy (2021 - 2026) was ratified and has become a reference point for action. In the last five years, women’s participation in politics and decision-making showed some form of optimism with the show in the State Houses of Assembly. (Ekiti, Rivers, Kwara, Akwa Ibom, Lagos) 14 States do not currently have any women in their House of Assembly. Despite the high-level advocacy and the several top-level men introduced to the He4She programme of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs the result was abysmally low.

There were opportunities for women to change the trajectory and these became openings for quick actions in the last five years. These were the Constitutional Review and Electoral Reforms that attracted the submission of memos by several women’s groups. Women submitted five Gender bills that were dropped. This led to a major national women’s action with representatives of all women’s groups including rural women occupying the National Assembly for almost one month. The outcome of this action was more awareness of the essence of women’s participation, women at the State level were trained on how to meet their legislators in the constituencies at the State level and make demands of the Nigeria they want. In the past five years, the role of the First Lady and the wives of the State Governors cannot be over-emphasized. Many of them were instrumental to the increase in the number of women in state parliaments and influencing women’s participation in politics.

3.4.2 Actions to Increase Women’s Access to Expression and Participation in Decision-Making in the Media

In the last five years, Nigerian media has made noticeable strides in its portrayal of women and women’s issues, but it remains a mixed landscape. Here are a few notable trends and examples:

a. **Highlighting Gender-Based Violence and Advocacy Efforts:**

The Nigerian media has increasingly covered gender-based violence (GBV), particularly following high-profile cases like the 2020 #JusticeForUwa campaign, which gained momentum after the tragic rape and murder of a student in Edo State. Media outlets, such as The Guardian Nigeria and Premium Times, have run investigative reports on GBV, bringing attention to the prevalence of violence against women and the inadequacies of law enforcement. Additionally, social media has amplified these issues, as seen with the #EndSARS protests, where police brutality and gender-based abuses were highlighted together, underscoring the intersection of women’s safety and broader social justice.

b. **Representation of Women in Leadership and Business:**

Nigerian media has increasingly showcased stories of successful women in leadership, business, and technology, countering stereotypes of women’s roles. Outlets like BusinessDay Nigeria have dedicated features to women entrepreneurs, while platforms like TechCabal and Ventures Africa frequently profile women leading startups and tech initiatives. Stories about leaders like Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the Director-General of the World Trade Organization, and

other high-profile Nigerian women have spotlighted the achievements of women in traditionally male-dominated fields, reinforcing positive narratives about women's capacity for leadership.

c. Campaigning for Women's Rights and Legislative Changes:

There has been a consistent focus on legislative reforms, such as coverage of the ongoing debate around the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, which is yet to be passed into law. Local media outlets like Channels TV and Punch have provided platforms for activists advocating for the bill, while also highlighting the opposition, mainly from conservative groups. This coverage has helped raise awareness about the legal barriers to gender equality and kept the public informed on the progress (or lack thereof) of women's rights legislation.

d. Coverage of Cultural Norms and Gender Stereotypes:

While progress has been made, some Nigerian media still reinforce traditional gender roles and stereotypes, particularly in entertainment and advertising. Women are often portrayed in caregiving or subordinate roles in television ads, dramas, and Nollywood movies, which are popular across the country. However, newer platforms and content creators are challenging these narratives by producing series and films with empowered female characters who break traditional molds, like in the Netflix series *King of Boys*, which portrays a powerful female lead in a political thriller. This shift indicates an evolving media landscape that is increasingly receptive to diverse representations of women.

In summary, Nigerian media has been both a catalyst for progress and a mirror of existing social norms, playing a crucial role in elevating women's issues and stories of empowerment while still grappling with the portrayal of women in traditional roles. The rise of digital media and social platforms has been particularly influential, as it allows for alternative narratives and advocacy that challenge and expand the traditional media portrayal of women in Nigeria.

3.4.3 Measures to Strengthen the National Women's Machinery

In the last five years, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs worked to strengthen the national women's machinery using new strategies of pulling together State Ministries through the National Council of Women platform. This has been an information-sharing and coordination platform on all issues that concern Nigerian women and girls. It is also a platform that allows for effective monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes carried out by sub-national entities. The BPfA emphasizes the establishment of a central coordinating unit on gender within government, to be led by a cabinet Minister; and the institutionalization of gender analysis processes as part of government policy making. Nigeria is effectively on this path:

- The Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs is Nigeria's central coordinating unit on gender issues within the government. Within the last five years, the Social Development arm of the Ministry was moved to the Ministry of Health while the humanitarian and social welfare-related arms were moved to the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs.
- The Ministry is managed by a Federal Cabinet-level Minister at the federal level and in the states by Commissioners of Women Affairs who also runs a state-level cabinet.

- Within this reporting period, the Ministry revised its National Gender Policy and Implementation plan which got a Presidential assent at the Federal Executive Council Meeting in 2022. This was to further strengthen the integration of a gender analysis system within public policy-making processes. Though some Line Ministries have undertaken gender studies on an ad hoc basis.
- Apart from ongoing law and policy reforms, the focal point system approved by the Federal Executive Council, (in 2011) has been sustained and is still active. This system establishes Gender Units in all Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), and the appointment of a Directorate Cadre officer to head such units. In the last five years, the expectation of all key stakeholders was high initially, and the existing political will dropped with its attendant effect on the responsiveness of line Ministries except the security agencies who had become more gender conscious and now have developed their gender policies for example, Gender Policy for the Armed Forces of Nigeria, 2021, Gender Policy for State Security Service, 2023 and a plethora of Gender policies in tertiary institutions and relevant institutions like the National Institute for Legislative Studies that now runs diverse strategic gender-focused meetings with key stakeholders in attendance and as beneficiaries. The National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, Jos, now runs a high-level gender training course for top officers in the political, economic, and executive cadre of government.
- One of the key challenges to achieving gender equality in Nigeria is the existence of a tripartite legal system that accommodates civil, religious, and customary laws. This posed a major barrier to women who strived to contest for high political seats as governors, members of the Senate and House of Representatives in their States in the 2023 general election.
- Another challenge is the acceptance of some forms of gender discrimination as cultural norms and the use of violence to maintain patriarchal hegemony. The gender-specific paradigms which have resulted from these limitations will require sustained advocacy in the long term, in order to ensure notable gender equality shifts in Nigeria. The 2023 General elections showed several violent acts that almost deterred women from participating in the senatorial race in Kogi State. The affected female politician did not relent, she took the path of justice, challenged her opponent in court, and won her senatorial seat.
- In the past five years, several innovative actions were carried out by Civil Society Actors, collaborating with the UNWOMEN, Action Aid Nigeria, Global Affairs Canada, Mac Arthur Foundation, European Union, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Organization [FCDO] to support Nigerian women in their effort towards promoting effective participation of women in politics and governance. Some of those actions that are still ongoing are the training of young women in politics across the country which is building a mass of young women who are beginning to position themselves as Special Advisers to political leaders. Some had the courage to contest in the Local Government Elections as councilors and won. Wives of leaders in the political and traditional class especially, the governors, Senators, Members of the House of Representatives, and their State counterparts in the State Houses of Assembly are

becoming leading champions for gender equality. Traditional leaders are now coopting women into their ruling councils across the country. These are giant strides towards breaking grounds for women in the political arena. Just recently in 2024, Members of the Constitution Review Committee of the House of Representatives led by the Speaker organized an International Conference to promote 74 extra temporary seats for women which should be tested for 4 election circles [16 years].

Women's groups are now stronger and bolder to challenge actions of the political class especially for the benefit of the poor and marginalized. [Occupy NASS 22].

3.4.4 Mechanisms and Tools to Mainstream Gender Equality across Sectors

Federal Ministry of Women Affairs has over the years worked to promote gender mainstreaming within the ministry and across sectors. To achieve this, all line ministries were encouraged to align with the National Gender Policy 2022. Gender Desk officers in Line Ministries, agencies, and the Armed Forces were appointed to manage all gender concerns in their institutions. Development of Gender Policies across sectors and in tertiary institutions were common features between 2020 and 2024 Another Gender Mainstreaming strategy was the use of the Gender Budgeting tools. In the year 2022, the National Budget Office mandated all budget officers to be trained in gender budgeting and use the tool for budget preparations.

One of the key challenges to achieving gender equality in Nigeria is the existence of a tripartite legal system that accommodates civil, religious, and customary laws. An attempt to effectively harmonize these laws was made in 2006 when the office of the Attorney General of the Federation instituted a Committee on Reform of Discriminatory Laws against Women. The report of this committee formed the basis of the "Abolition of all forms of Discrimination against Women in Nigeria and Other Related Matters Bill 2006", which is before the National Assembly for enactment into law. This still stands as a major challenge today. The Gender Policy of 2022, though a more robust document that should address the issues, does not seem to have the legal strength required for the next level of action.

Another challenge is the acceptance of some forms of gender discrimination as cultural norms and the use of violence to maintain patriarchal hegemony. The gender-specific paradigms which have resulted from these limitations will require sustained advocacy in the long term, to ensure notable gender equality shifts in Nigeria. It is still necessary to step up advocacy on special measures such as quotas, reserved seats, benchmarks, and targets that promote women's participation in politics especially at decision-making level. In the last five years, women across Nigeria now has a better understanding of the need to engage politicians particularly legislators both at the National and sub-national levels. Actions by Civil Society Groups, such as occupying the National Assembly and the high-level constituents' engagements just before the 2023 elections prepared good grounds for the current activities of the 10th Assembly towards reforms that will create opportunities for more women in both the National Assembly and State Assemblies.

3.4.5 National Human Rights Institution to Address Violations of Women's Rights and Promote Gender Equality

The National Human Rights Commission, National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Gender Units in all Police Stations across the country are some of the most important institutions for addressing violations of and promoting women's rights and gender equality in Nigeria.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Nigeria is an independent public body that works to promote, protect, and enforce human rights in the country. The NHRC's work on women's rights and gender equality include:

- Promoting gender equality: The NHRC works to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Addressing gender-based violence: The NHRC promotes policies to address gender-based violence.
- Closing the gender pay gap: The NHRC promotes policies to close the gender pay gap.
- Educating the public: The NHRC organizes seminars and workshops to educate the public on human rights issues.

National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) - The Agency is the Federal Government of Nigeria's response to addressing the scourge of trafficking in persons. It is a fulfillment of the country's international obligation under the Trafficking in Persons Protocol to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Transnational Organized Crime Convention (UNTOC).

The Trafficking in Persons Act 2003 was an outcome of a private member bill sponsored at the National Assembly by the Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), a non-governmental organization founded by Mrs. Amina Titi Atiku Abubakar, the wife of the Vice-President of Nigeria at that time. NAPTIP developed a gender policy in 2021 for the agency to guide and mainstream gender in all its operations to ensure fairness and equity.

The Nigeria Police Force has a Gender Unit at the Force Criminal Intelligence & Investigation Department (Force CIID) and also has Juvenile Women and Children Units (JWCs) in some police stations:

- Gender Unit: Created in 2014 to encourage survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) to report incidents and prosecute perpetrators.
- Juvenile Women and Children Units (JWCs): Also known as Family Support Units in some locations, these units are designed to prevent, detect, and investigate crimes against women and children. They also ensure that victims are handled sensitively, gather evidence, and safeguard victims from further harm.

The Nigeria Police Force also has a Gender Policy that responds to the National Gender Policy,

which recognizes that operational procedures and protocols in law enforcement agencies are often biased in favour of men.

Other organizations that work to promote women's rights and gender equality in Nigeria include:

- Federal Ministry of Women Affairs - The broad mandate of the Ministry is to advise the government on Gender and Children issues. Issues affecting Persons with Disabilities and the Aged; initiate policy guidelines and lead the process of gender equality and mainstreaming at both the National and International levels.
- The National Centre for Women Development (NCWD) is an agency of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. It is a non-political not-for-profit organization. It is now named Mariam Babangida National Centre for Women Development.
- The Centre is charged with the mandate for Gender Training and Capacity Building, Research, and Documentation in addition to addressing the concerns of Nigerian Women.

Another area of importance is the ratification and domestication of international human rights Conventions especially those that have implications for women's access and choices. Nigeria has ratified 9 out of the 13 major global human rights frameworks in existence. They are:

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (04-1-69)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (29-10-93)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (29-10-93)
- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (13-7-85)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (28-7-01)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (19-4-91)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (08-9-00)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (08-9-00)

At least two of these international legislations have been domesticated or integrated as part of the country's national and state laws. These are the Protocol to prevent trafficking in persons and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Also, the National Action Plan on UNSCR was adopted by the Federal Executive Council while some aspects of CEDAW were integrated in the VAPP Act.

Examples of regional instruments relevant here are:

- The African complement to the UN Declaration on Human Rights (UNDHR) is contained in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights which was adopted by OAU (now AU) member states in 1981.

- The Charter is unique to the extent that it addresses some of the limitations in access and opportunities that are contextual to the African continent because of factors such as patriarchy, religion, and cultural beliefs. For instance, in Article 18(3) the Charter provides that ‘The State shall ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of the woman and the child as stipulated in international declarations and conventions which are a product of cultural, religious and social factors...’
- The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (also referred to as the Maputo Protocol) was conceptualized to provide further clarity on what the state is expected to do to prevent and eliminate discrimination against women.

Some of the institutional mechanisms that currently exist to safeguard and advance the human rights of men and women in Nigeria include:

- The establishment of the National Human Rights Commission, the Legal Aid Council, and the Directorate for Citizens’ Rights which has been established in some states.
- The passage of the Prohibition of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Act 2018. The Act was signed into law on the 17th January 2019. The National Commission for Persons with Disability was set up as an Agency
- The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN). The CFRN covers many of the rights identified within international and regional human rights paradigms. Chapter four of the Nigerian Constitution 1999, which is also known as known as the ‘Fundamental Rights’ Section of the Constitution has extensive provision on Human Rights. The following rights, which are covered in chapter 4, apply to both women and men:
 - Right to life, S.33(1)
 - Right to Dignity of Human Person, S.34(1)
 - Right to Personal Liberty, S.35(1)
 - Right to Fair Hearing, S.36(1)
 - Right to Private Family Life, S.37
 - Right to Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion, S. 38(1)
 - Right to Peaceful Assembly and Association, S.40
 - Right to Freedom of Movement, S. 41(1)
 - Right to Freedom from Discrimination, S. 42(1)
 - Right to Acquire and Own immovable property anywhere in Nigeria, S.43

Chapter 2 of the Constitution deals with Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, also known within the human rights paradigm as ECOSOC rights. It provides in section 14 that every Nigerian (male and female) has the right to the security and welfare of the people as this is the primary purpose of government. Other areas covered in chapter 2 include the right of women and men to economic development [section 16(2) (a)]; the right to freedom from employment-related discrimination for women and men [section 17(3)]; and the right to equal educational opportunities at all levels [section 18]. The provisions in chapter 2 are not enforceable in a

court of law but rather serve as an indicative guide for all Nigerians. Chapter 4 however can be enforced via an application brought before a State High Courts by an aggrieved party.

3.5 Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

3.5.1 Actions taken to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, and implement the women, peace, and security agenda

- The Federal Government commenced machinery for the development of a ‘3rd National Action Plan’ aimed at addressing women’s peace and security issues in line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 which emphasized the increased participation of women in security sector institutions. The Action Plan is expected to be finalized for subsequent implementation by April 2021.
- As Nigeria is currently developing its third National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on the WPS agenda, valuable lessons regarding the integral role of women’s groups in addressing WPS priorities and gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding efforts was considered. The experiences of the women’s groups established by Mercy Corps through the USAID-funded Community Initiatives to Promote Peace (CIPP) Program, a peacebuilding programme implemented in the northwest and north central regions of Nigeria, provide such valuable knowledge. To identify the lessons from CIPP’s women’s groups, Mercy Corps conducted a mixed-methods research study in 2023 focusing on the programme’s Women’s Critical Discussion Groups (WCDGs) and Women Peacebuilding Councils (WPCs). The study identifies novel evidence and lessons that could contribute to the development and impact of Nigeria’s third NAP and the country’s overall gender, peace, and security (GPS) efforts, particularly at the community level. In addition to the unique approach and contributions of the WCDGs and WPCs to community-level peacebuilding, the study’s findings identify three distinct ways in which strategies utilized by the WCDGs and WPCs expand GPS efforts at the community level, specifically: (1) women’s groups fill important gaps that other peace and security actors cannot fill; (2) effective GPS efforts prioritize youth engagement and intersectionality; and (3) collaboration and support from other peace and security actors, particularly male actors and security agencies, contribute to their success. These findings lead to valuable recommendations for government and GPS actors developing Nigeria’s next NAP (such as the mobilization and allocation of sufficient resources for women’s peace groups) and for civil society actors focusing on GPS (such as the development and support of new or existing women’s groups, and the importance of connecting peacebuilding programmes to other sectors).
- Similarly, UN Women provided capacity building and institutional strengthening on gender mainstreaming and implementation of the provisions of UNSCR 1325 to Government Ministries Department and Agencies (MDAs), Judiciary, Security Institutions (Armed Forces of Nigeria, Police and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps), Traditional Institutions, Civil Society Organizations, Women-Led Organisations and Media. A network of Women Mediators and HeForShe Male Gender

Champions was established in the target states, actively engaged in gender-sensitive peacebuilding initiatives at all levels.

- The project “*Enhancing Gender Responsive Security Sector Reform and Strengthening Community-Security Relations*” was designed in response to gaps identified in women’s representation in the security sector and the broader need for a gender-responsive approach to security operations. This project aims to enhance the gender-sensitive security sector and foster community dialogue between women affected by conflict and security sector actors through three pillars of engagement:
 - a) *Strategic level* - The project seeks to put in place an enabling gender-sensitive policy environment including through policy dialogue and policy development;
 - b) *Capacity Building* - The project supports capacity building for security personnel through the development and roll-out of relevant training curriculum and materials, particularly for front-line personnel;
 - c) *Strategic Collaboration* - The project supports meaningful engagement and collaboration by affected women and women’s organisations with security sector institutions and personnel in community security in the two target areas in the North East (Borno and Yobe states).

The project contributed to the attainment of the following milestones: Capacity building and institutional strengthening of security agencies in Nigeria, particularly the Armed Forces of Nigeria, Nigeria Police Force and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, by deepening the knowledge of officers on Gender Mainstreaming and the Women, Peace and Security frameworks, including the key pillars of UNSCR 1325 and the attendant Nigerian National and State Action Plans on the Resolution; Establishment of Security Sector Gender Reference Group, comprising of Gender Advisers and Focal Points from all security sector institutions. The Group serves as an inter-agency platform for identifying strategic issues and gaps (policy and programming) regarding the gender-responsive security sector in Nigeria. Moreover, the project supported the development of gender policy for the Armed Forces of Nigeria and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, officially launched on 31st March 2021 and 15th July 2021, respectively.

- A roadmap was established for the Nigerian Legislators on The Nigerian Legislature’s Role in Advancing Women, Peace, and Security with Linkages between the SDGs and WPS and several Action Points for Legislators. It represents a significant resource for leveraging the unique functions of our Legislature to advance Nigeria’s commitments to women, peace, and security as contained in UNSCR 1325 and related instruments. The Guide not only provides a substantive overview of the women, peace, and security agenda, how it applies to Nigeria, and its linkage to the global and national development agenda, but also presents practical insights and guidance on how the Legislature, at all levels, can use its lawmaking, oversight and representational functions to further implementation, with its usefulness extending to parliamentary staff, legislative groups and organizations, as well as development practitioners who work with the Legislature.

- In Nigeria, WISCOD (Women Initiative for Sustainable Community Development) works on community policing and enhancing women’s involvement and community action, increasing women's participation in and experience of security and protection. WISCOD used Resourcing Change funding to first establish the women peace network (WPN) and then increase and improve the capacity of women in the network to address perceived gaps in peace and security. The capacity strengthening focused on conflict monitoring, understanding GBV reporting procedures, and building livelihood and leadership skills. Women in the peace network received targeted training on election monitoring which they deployed in the 2023 Nigerian general election; they increased their participation in existing peace structures within their communities across the border communities in Jos North and Jos South. The WPN proceeded to advocate for the inclusion of five women as advisers to the Head Chief of Naraguta Village, significantly increasing the role of women in village affairs. The WPN is now strategically positioned to address conflict issues, including mediation amongst conflicting parties and issues like SGBV, and they see the appointed women advisers as being able to ‘serve as the voice for the voiceless’ with meaningful roles in community leadership. These activities are already increasing women’s visibility and voices in their local peace and security infrastructures and will support women in the network to take on more active roles in governance and decision-making at the community level.

3.5.2 Actions to Increase Women’s Leadership, Representation, and Participation in Conflict Prevention, Resolution, Peacebuilding, Humanitarian Action, and Crisis Response.

- While progress has been gradual, some women have ascended to leadership positions within security sectors and local government, influencing policy decisions and promoting women’s perspectives in peace and security dialogues
- Women leaders in these committees (particularly in conflict-affected areas like Borno, Adamawa, and Plateau states) have contributed to reducing communal tensions, advocating for women’s protection, and promoting gender-sensitive rehabilitation programmes for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and ex-combatants.
- Women leaders in conflict-prone regions are now better equipped to lead local peace processes and serve as mediators. Training has empowered women to engage more actively in humanitarian response efforts, with some forming women-led local organizations focused on crisis response.
- The presence of women in these community security networks has led to better monitoring of GBV incidents, increased reporting, and stronger community advocacy for the protection of women and girls in conflict-affected areas
- Women’s participation in humanitarian action has improved the responsiveness to gender-specific needs in camps, such as access to healthcare, menstrual hygiene products, and safe spaces. Women-led initiatives have increased attention to trauma counselling and rehabilitation programmes tailored for women and children affected by conflict.

- International support has bolstered national initiatives, creating opportunities for Nigerian women to engage in regional peacebuilding dialogues, share best practices, and advocate for broader implementation of the WPS agenda.
- Improved Representation and Influence: More women now participate in peacebuilding and humanitarian action, with some taking on leadership roles in peace committees, local councils, and security-related NGOs.
- Enhanced Gender-Sensitive Peacebuilding Approaches: The inclusion of women has led to more gender-sensitive approaches to conflict resolution, addressing the unique needs of women and girls and emphasizing rehabilitation and social cohesion.
- Increased Reporting and Response to GBV: The involvement of women in community policing and humanitarian action has led to higher reporting rates of GBV incidents

3.5.3 Actions to Enhance Judicial and Non-Judicial Accountability for Violations of International Humanitarian Law and Violations of the Human Rights of Women and Girls in Conflicts or Humanitarian Action and Crisis Response

Achievements (2019-2024)

1. Passage of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) in More States: Several Nigerian states have adopted the VAPP Act (Kano, Lagos, Ogun, Borno, Kwara, Edo, Kaduna, Ekiti, Enugu, Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Adamawa, Osun, Akwa Ibom, Oyo, and Anambra State), initially enacted at the federal level, which addresses gender-based violence (GBV) and includes protections for women and girls in conflict and crisis settings. This expansion strengthens the legal basis for prosecuting perpetrators of GBV.
2. Establishment of the National Human Rights Commission's Special Investigation Panel: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) launched special investigative panels on violations against women and girls in conflict zones, with a focus on military accountability. These panels have addressed complaints and documented abuses, contributing to greater transparency and accountability. This was launched in 2019.
3. Progress in Military Accountability: The Nigerian Armed Forces have undergone reforms to improve internal accountability, including mandatory training on human rights and International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Some cases of abuse have led to prosecutions and dismissals, showing commitment to addressing violations, although implementation has been gradual. In 2024, the Nigerian military continued implementing training programmes for personnel on IHL principles to reinforce compliance during operations, especially in conflict zones affecting civilians.
4. Engagement with International Human Rights Bodies: Nigeria has worked with international bodies like the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and the African Union to address human rights abuses, improving monitoring and adherence to international standards. This collaboration has helped establish frameworks for holding violators accountable.
5. Increased Focus on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS): There has been growth in MHPSS services for survivors of conflict-related violence, supported by the

Nigerian government and international organizations, which assist survivors in healing and accessing justice.

6. Community-Based Conflict Resolution Initiatives: Community justice mechanisms, supported by NGOs and local authorities, are increasingly used to address violations against women and girls. These programmes offer accessible avenues for survivors to seek justice outside of formal court systems, particularly in remote or conflict-affected areas.

Key Challenges (2019-2024)

1. Inconsistent Enforcement of Laws and Legal Frameworks
2. Weakness in the Judicial System
3. Limited Training and Awareness Among Law Enforcement and Judicial Officials
4. Social Stigma and Cultural Barriers
5. Inadequate Survivor Support Services
6. Resource Constraints and Funding Gaps
7. Insecurity and Accessibility in Conflict Zones

Challenges

- While laws like the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) have been adopted in some states, nationwide enforcement is inconsistent. Many states have yet to implement or enforce laws that protect women and girls in conflict areas, reducing the effectiveness of these laws.
- Nigeria's judiciary faces backlogs, limited capacity, and sometimes corruption, which hinder the timely processing of cases involving IHL violations and human rights abuses.
- Many law enforcement officers, judicial officials, and even military personnel lack adequate training in IHL and gender-sensitive approaches. This lack of knowledge can lead to mishandling cases of abuse and a lack of proper investigation or prosecution.
- Women and girls who report violence often face stigma, shame, and social rejection, which discourages them from seeking justice. In some communities, cultural norms also tolerate or condone violence against women and girls.
- Access to essential services for survivors, such as legal aid, psychosocial support, and safe shelters, remains limited, particularly in conflict-affected areas.
- Limited funding for judicial reforms, legal aid, and survivor support services has hampered progress. Insufficient resources for investigative bodies and judicial systems have led to delays and reduced the quality of accountability mechanisms.
- Active conflict and insecurity in parts of Nigeria restrict access to areas where violations occur, making it difficult to investigate cases or implement accountability measures.

Impact on Women and Girls

- This inconsistency leaves many women and girls vulnerable to violence and limits their ability to seek justice.

- Delayed justice can discourage victims from pursuing cases and weaken public trust in the judicial system as a means of accountability.
- Victims may face further trauma when interacting with uninformed officials, and accountability efforts can stall due to improper handling of cases.
- The fear of social repercussions deters survivors from reporting abuses, making it challenging to hold perpetrators accountable and reduce underreporting.
- Without adequate support, survivors may not be able to participate in accountability processes or access justice, reinforcing a cycle of impunity.
- The lack of resources makes it challenging to build sustainable and effective systems for holding violators accountable, especially in conflict-prone regions where needs are urgent.
- Limited access to affected communities prevents the collection of evidence, and survivors in these areas are often unable to report abuses or access justice mechanisms.

3.5.4 Actions to Eliminate Discrimination against and Violations of the Rights of the Girl Child

1. Strengthen Legal Protections and Enforcement

In the last five years, certain actions were taken by the Nigerian Government, and CSOs have implemented and Enforced the Child Rights Act Nationwide: Ensure that all states adopt and fully implement the Child Rights Act, which provides comprehensive protections for children, including specific protections for girls against child marriage, abuse, and exploitation. An example is the case of Dr. Femi Olaleye who was jailed and sentenced to life imprisonment for abusing the minor in his custody, he was arraigned on November 30, 2022.

2. Promote Equal Access to Quality Education

Expand Scholarships and Financial Support: Provide scholarships, free textbooks, uniforms, and other support to encourage girls' enrolment in primary and secondary education, particularly in underserved regions. For example, the National Home-Grown School feeding programme provided free meals for students. Also, the Nigerian Gender Policy on Education focuses on strategies to increase girl's enrolment.

3. Address Harmful Cultural Practices and Social Norms

Widow Protection Advocacy by Widows and Orphans Empowerment Organization (WEWE). WEWE in collaboration with government agencies, supported widows facing abusive cultural practices, including widow inheritance, they also provided legal aid, vocational training, and financial support, particularly in Southeastern Nigeria. Nigeria joined the UN Spotlight Initiative, a global campaign focused on ending violence against women and girls.

4. Enhance Access to Healthcare and Reproductive Rights

Break the Silence campaign launched by Action Health Incorporated was launched in 2021, this campaign was aimed to reduce the stigma surrounding reproductive health issues and encourage open conversations about women's reproductive rights. Annually, the government

conducted trainings for midwives and health workers to improve maternal and reproductive health services. UKAID and USAID since 2019 till now funded reproductive health programmes, focusing on family planning, maternal health and youth reproductive rights. In August 12, 2021, USAID joined the Minister of State for Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT), raining and financial support, particularly in Southeastern Nigeria. raining and financial support, particularly in Southeastern Nigeria. Hajia Ramatu Tijani Aliyu to inaugurate a new primary health care steering committee that will help the FCT Administration improve access and delivery of primary health care to its three million constituents.

5. Strengthen Economic Support and Empowerment Programmes

GEEP (Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme) 2.0 was relaunched in 2021 as this provided micro-loans to small-scale traders, artisans, and farmers, including special loans like MarketMonie, FarmerMonie and TraderMonie. By 2024, GEEP has expanded across several Nigerian states like focusing on empowering women entrepreneurs with accessible and affordable credit to start or scale their businesses. In Imo state, the Federal Government launched the GEEP 2.0 on the 10th of September 2022 to assist the poor. The then Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development, Sadiya Umar Farouq, inaugurated the national phase of the programme in Owerri.

AECF (Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund) on the 10th of October 2023 launched a programme to empower women in the agriculture sector in Kano state and this programme was to transform the role of women in the Agriculture value chain in Kano state.

6. Enhance Reporting and Accountability Mechanisms

The Independent Investigative Mechanism for Security Forces was established in 2021 in response to reports of abuses, an independent investigative mechanism was introduced to improve accountability for misconduct by military and police personnel. This mechanism, supported by both government bodies and CSOs, offers a system for reporting abuses while ensuring protection for witnesses and whistleblowers. The establishment of Human Rights Desks Office in Police Stations established in 2020 across Nigeria, was established to handle complaints of abuse and ensure a fair response. The Creation of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) are present in Lagos, Kano, Enugu, Kaduna, Akwa Ibom, Borno, Benue, Ekiti, Cross River, Yobe, Anambra, and Adamawa State. The establishment and expansion of SARCs across Nigeria have been facilitated by partnerships between state governments, CSOs, and international agencies to improve access to critical support services for SGBV survivors.

7. Promote Political and Civil Participation of Girls

The Not Too Young To Run Initiative Expansion became stronger in 2019. Originally a movement to lower the age barrier for running for political office, it has through its Inclusive and Accountable Politics (IAP) been working continuously to build the capabilities of young persons in politics. WRAPA (Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative) in 2021, initiated a safe space where young girls could engage in political dialogue without fear of discrimination or harassment.

8. Collaborate with International Organizations and NGOs

Global Fund Partnership for Malaria, HIV and Tuberculosis Control from 2019-2024

The Nigerian government worked with the Global Fund to combat malaria, HIV, and tuberculosis through funding, capacity building, and healthcare programmes. Also, the UNICEF's Girls Education and Gender Equality Programmes; UNICEF and Nigerian CSOs collaborated with the government on initiatives to promote girls' education and gender equality. Programs like "Girls for Girls" (G4G) aimed to increase girls' enrolment, reduce dropout rates, and empower young women through mentorship. European Union (EU) partnered with Nigerian CSOs and government institutions to strengthen the rule of law, justice, and governance systems. Initiatives like the Rule of Law and Anti-corruption (RoLAC) programme provided legal aid to marginalized groups and supported anti-corruption agencies.

3.6 Environment Conservation, Protection and Rehabilitation

3.6.1 Actions to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation, and land degradation

Climate change is a growing threat to biodiversity in Nigeria. It affects individual species and the way they interact with other organisms and their habitats, which alters the structure and function of ecosystems and the goods and services that natural systems provide to society. Different policies made to facilitate and help reduce the impact of climate change include the National Climate Change Policy, approved in 2021 and covers 2021-2023, Climate Change Act passed in 2021, Energy Transmission Act (ETP), the creation of the Climate Change with Ministry of Environment, natural gas climate policy to cover 2021-2023 (National Climate Change Policy 2021-2023)

Women and Climate Change

Climate change has a disproportionate impact on women and girls, and they are often on the front lines of the climate crisis. The reason more women are impacted by climate change include:

- Gender-based Violence
- poor access to land ownership
- Women have the least time to access education
- Poverty and lack of access to maternal health care and women refugees living in IDP camps.
- Heat and pollution affect women's maternal health

This therefore calls for women to be included in the decision-making table.

Causes of Environmental Degradation

- Deforestation: The removal of forests for agriculture or urban development significantly reduces habitats for wildlife and contributes to climate change.
- Pollution: Air, water, and soil pollution from industrial processes and the disposal of waste materials contaminate the environment and harm living organisms.

- Overconsumption: The excessive use of natural resources faster than they can be replenished leads to depletion of those resources.
- Climate Change: Changes in the Earth's climate due to greenhouse gas emissions lead to extreme weather conditions and disruptions in natural balance.
- Agricultural Practices: The use of chemicals in farming and excessive groundwater extraction degrade the soil and water quality

National Gender Policy

The National Gender Policy is designed to address the issue of imbalance in the opportunities available to women compared to men. The policy aims to dismantle barriers that limit women's access to and control over resources to enable them to break out of the poverty cycle and become more active economic agents. The goal of the policy is to build a just society devoid of discrimination where the needs and concerns of women, men, girls, and boys are mainstreamed equitably into all sectors of national development by developing and utilizing the capabilities and capacities of women, who make up half of the nation's population. Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Nigeria produced its NDCs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions following the adoption of a new climate change agreement at the 21st session of the COP to the UNFCCC in Paris, in December 2015. NDCs is a country-specific pledge to reduce carbon emissions, which is an obligation of the Parties to the Paris Agreement. Nigeria's main targets for its NDC are 20% unconditional and 45% conditional greenhouse gas emission reduction by 2030. The key priority sectors of Nigeria's NDC include - Agriculture and Land Use, Power, Transport, Energy, Oil and Gas. The idea is to adapt this plan in key areas – Agriculture, Disaster Risk Management, Education, Energy, Environment, Health, Forestry, Urban, and Water. The Department of Climate Change of the Federal Ministry of Environment in a bid to achieve the NDC has developed the National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. In addition, there was the development of Nigeria's Sovereign Green Bond in 2017.

Women and the Environment

Agriculture, Forestry, and Land Use Agriculture is an important aspect of Nigeria's economy and accounts for about 22.86% of GDP. Even though only about 32 million hectares of land are under cultivation, agriculture contributes significantly to employment, food production, and export. Agriculture is the source of food and provides employment opportunities to 37% of the country's population, with strong linkages to other sectors through downstream activities such as agro-processing, consumption and export, providing raw materials to industries, and providing a market for manufactured goods. Food security is a major priority for the Nigerian government sync.

In Nigeria, more women live in rural areas where their livelihoods depend predominantly on agriculture. The agricultural sector in Nigeria accounts for 22.86% of the GDP Women constitute a substantial part of the agricultural labour force (75%), in a sector that is largely characterized by smallholder farmers that mostly cultivate rain-fed farms. The major constraint facing the agricultural sector is the declining labour and access to land use resulting in a decrease in productivity as a result of the use of poor technology and an overdependence on

unpredictable and irregular weather conditions that is aggravated by the effects of climate change, which leads to livestock and crop failures impacting negatively on dependent communities.

Agricultural growth is strongly reliant on environmental resources such as land, forest, and water. The sustainable use of these resources is vital for the growth and sustainability of the sector. Nigeria is endowed with rich forestland and biodiversity; the forest area is valued at 7.68% of the country. The forest encompasses three vegetation types: the swamp forest, tropical rainforest, and secondary regrowth, which are all found in the southern part of the country, and some game reserves in the northern part of the country. The forests in Nigeria are an important source of food, medicine, income for local people, and raw materials for industries. Deforestation is currently a major challenge in Nigeria, with an annual deforestation rate of 3.5%. Lumbering, animal grazing, fuelwood, and charcoal production are the major drivers of deforestation in Nigeria. Due to the link between forests and climate change, there are concerns about the unsustainability of current levels and processes of extraction and consumption of forest products.

Related Regulatory and Policies

- National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action for Climate Change in Nigeria (NASPA-CCN 2011)
- Nigeria Climate Change Policy Response and Strategy (2012)
- National Agricultural Resilience Framework (2014)
- Agriculture Promotion Policy (2016)
- National Gender Policy (2021)
- National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change for Nigeria (2020)
- Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

Implementation Status

Nigeria's Climate Change Act became law on November 18, 2021. The legislation sets objectives for decreasing carbon emissions. Recognizing the importance of gender mainstreaming in the execution of the Paris Agreement Nigeria signed the measure. Nigeria joins the UK, New Zealand, France, Sweden, Ireland, and Scotland in having Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), the Federal Ministry of Environment established a gender mainstreaming task force (through the Department of Climate Change) with assistance from the Women's Environmental Program (WEP) and the United Nations

Measures to mitigate Climate Change

- i. Adhering to predetermined periodic review processes as an inbuilt mechanism in tracking policy and performance implementation plans, to measure progress, learn lessons, and embrace emerging issues;
- ii. Baseline indicators and performance parameters that revealed widening gender gaps in Nigeria as compared to other countries, thus providing a timely opportunity to call attention to salient issues; and

- iii. Considering Gender issues, including experiences of women, girls, and other vulnerable groups under current counter-insurgency, conflict, and complex humanitarian emergencies in the country; and in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals which requires policy objectives geared at meeting new globally agreed standards, among others. The policy review exercise recognizes that Nigerian women face barriers to full equality, empowerment, and advancement because of patriarchy, socialization patterns, disability, socio-economic status including their living conditions - rural/urban; refugee/internal displacement due to environmental disasters and various forms of violence (insurgency, kidnapping, and banditry), and epidemics.

Measures to mitigate climate issues in Nigeria in the past five years

- Sensitization and awareness creation programmes and opportunities for women, men, and children to work together towards sustainable societies.
- Government at the national and local levels ensuring that women participate in all decision-making related to climate change at all levels to build an effective alliance for community adaptation.
- Community-based planning made starting points for scaling up provincial and national responses.
- Integrating climate change adaptation policies into long-term planning for sustainable developments and poverty alleviation policies

3.6.2 Actions to Integrate Gender Perspectives and Concerns into Policies and Programmes for Disaster Risk Reduction and Building Environmental and Climate Resilience

- The African Risk Capacity (ARC) Agency and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) signed an agreement Investment Grant on “Gender Responsive Mechanisms for Epidemic Preparedness in ECOWAS to support the member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to provide rapid and appropriate gender-sensitive responses to disease outbreaks and epidemics in the region. Under the direction of the ARC O&E and Gender Units and with the support of the Country Engagement Managers, a Gender analysis, looking at the linkages between Gender, Health Emergency, and Disaster Risk Management in Nigeria was conducted. The Terms of References included an in-depth gender analysis of the health sector from the Disaster Risk Management and Financing (DRM&F) perspective. The analysis aimed to identify gaps & challenges and proposed recommendations for gender integration in DRM&F towards gender transformation of the sector in Nigeria. With a targeted approach, the project aims to enhance gender-responsive mechanisms for Disaster and Risk preparedness, response, and post-disaster Management in selected countries, placing particular emphasis on Nigeria. The backdrop of this initiative is entwined into the fabric of Nigeria’s socio-economic challenges, cultural diversity, and susceptibility to climate-induced hazards and DRM&F.
- Nigeria's Climate Change Act became law on November 18, 2021. Then President Muhammadu Buhari of the Federal Republic of Nigeria signed the measure. Nigeria joins the UK, New Zealand, France, Sweden, Ireland, and Scotland in having legislation

that sets objectives for decreasing carbon emissions. The Nigerian Climate Change Act, 2021 represents a major legislative framework for Nigeria’s energy transition roadmap and is a key step in its bid to achieve inclusive green, and sustainable economic development. It provides an all-inclusive legal and regulatory framework for achieving Nigeria’s long-term climate goals and implementing an energy transition roadmap in a bid to achieve Nigeria’s net zero target.

- Recognizing the importance of gender mainstreaming in the execution of the Paris Agreement and Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), the Federal Ministry of Environment established a gender mainstreaming task force (through the Department of Climate Change) with assistance from the Women's Environmental Programme (WEP) and the United Nations.

Section Four: National Institutions and Processes

4.1 National Strategy / Action Plan for Gender Equality

The overall objective and gender equality goal of the National Gender Policy (NGP, 2021 – 2026) is a society in which women and men; girls and boys; and other vulnerable groups enjoy the same opportunities, rights, and obligations in all spheres of life. The goal of 2021 NGP is ***“to build a just society devoid of discrimination, where the needs and concerns of women, men, girls, boys, and other vulnerable groups are mainstreamed equitably into all sectors of national development”***. As earlier stated in this report, the NGP represents a set of minimum standards expected of the Nigerian Government to meet its mandate for gender equality, good governance, accountability, and being socially responsive to the needs of its vulnerable groups. Gender equality is crucial for socio-economic development as well as the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the principle of ‘leave no one behind’, and the African Agenda 2030, ‘*the African we want*’, with a central point of view on gender equality, and empowerment of the African woman in the new economic age. By implication, achieving this core principle demands that ‘gendered power relations’ which serve as triggers of social, political, cultural, and economic exclusion are dealt with, while the benefits of sustainable development are extended to groups that are routinely and structurally excluded, that is, women, girls, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and the poor among others. The attainment of gender equality is not only seen as an end in itself and a human rights issue but as a prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable development. Importantly, three (3) key elements, contained in the GEESI Framework (Gender Equality, Empowerment of Women, and Social Inclusion) drive this policy.

The National Gender Policy is anchored within the framework of the Constitution of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), which guarantees equality and the right to freedom from discrimination; and the various global, regional, and national policy commitments to gender equality and human rights (including CEDAW; the Beijing Platform of Action; the SDGs; the African Charter and its Protocols for Gender Equality amongst others). It provides institutional guidelines for achieving a just and gender-equitable society, with women and men contributing optimally to and benefitting from national development across all sectors. The policy is anchored on a conceptual framework that revolves around four (4) mutually reinforcing pillars

namely: Policy and Legislation; Systems and Structures; Processes, Procedures, and Mechanisms and Services, Goods, and Products. The Gender Policy affirms the importance of gender equality, not only as a fundamental human right but also as essential to poverty reduction and improved living standards, sustainable economic growth, and effective and accountable governance.

Specific policy priority areas that the revised NGP addresses are:

- i. Legislation and policy frameworks
- ii. Economic Empowerment, Productivity, and Livelihoods
 - Gender, Agriculture & Rural Development
 - Gender and Employment (Labour Participation)
 - Gender and the Business Sector (Informal & Formal Sectors)
 - Sports & Entertainment Industry
 - Unpaid Care Work & the Household Economy
- iii. Human Development
 - Health, Survival and Nutrition
 - Maternal & Child Health/Child Development
 - Gender and the Health Systems
 - Education Attainment, Vocational & Life Skills
 - Social Protection
 - Gender and Disability
- iv. GEESI in other Key Institutions in the Social Sector
 - Water & Sanitation
 - Housing
 - Gender, Environment and Climate Change
 - The Media
- v. GEESI in the Security Sector
 - GEESI in the Security Institutions
 - Counter-insurgency, Conflict and Peacekeeping
 - Management of Complex Humanitarian Emergencies
- vi. GEESI in Access to Justice, Human Rights & Governance
 - The Nigerian Justice System
 - Human and Women's Rights
 - Accountability, Transparency & openness in Governance
- vii. GEESI, Leadership and Political Participation
 - GEESI & the Nigerian Political System & Structures
 - GEESI and the Electoral System
 - GEESI and Community Level Leadership
- viii. GEESI, Gender Norms and Socio-cultural Practices
 - The 'Girl Child'
 - The 'Boy Child'
 - Harmful Traditional Practices Against Women and Girls
 - Sexual /Gender-Based Violence

- Transforming Local Level Governance

Advancing Gender Equality through Coordination

The UN Women Country Strategic Note (2023-2027) outlines eight key goals to advance Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) in Nigeria by 2027, including increasing female representation in decision-making, strengthening women's organizations, improving access to resources, and ensuring robust GEWE coordination across all 36 states. In furtherance of its implementation, the Country Office in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs has attained great success in efforts at strengthening coordination between all actors at the Federal and State levels in planning and programming on gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE). This effort birthed the Zonal Coordination Mechanisms/Platforms – a multi-layered coordination platform that facilitates the formation and strengthening of state and local government coordination platforms on one hand and the establishment and strengthening of a national coordination platform on the other hand.

Stakeholders, including partners at the state level, legislators, and women leaders in various sectors, came together at the 2024 coordination meeting and UN Women Partners' Open Day hosted across four geo-political zones to, among others, showcase successes and secure new commitments from stakeholders. The following success stories resulting from improved coordination of women at all levels included:

- Kano State has achieved a remarkable 300% increase in its GEWE budget, with a dedicated allocation for coordination, setting a strong example for other states.
- Kwara State stands out with 50% women representation in leadership roles, a significant milestone in gender equality.
- Lagos State has successfully implemented an effective GEWE coordination mechanism across all MDAs, reinforcing gender mainstreaming at every level.
- Kaduna state budget, for the first time, has allocated funds specifically to combat Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) across Kaduna, marking a significant stride in addressing this pressing issue. The state has built SARC centres for girls and boys as well as a diversion centre for children.
- There has been an increase in women's participation in leadership roles in Kaduna State, with women now serving as members of the Traditional Council. This development provides easier access to traditional leaders for women.
- More women have been appointed to strategic and key positions, including the first female Commandant of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) in Kaduna State, who subsequently appointed five other women as Heads of Departments within the NSCDC.
- Osun State celebrated a historic first as the First Lady lent her support to the 16 Days of Activism, making a powerful impact on women and girls, especially in rural areas.
- Ondo state governor appointed a woman as Commissioner for Finance, a historic first in the state.
- Cross River state has abolished the ancient, harmful practices called 'Money Wives'.

- Awareness of gender equality and women’s empowerment programmes has significantly increased in Nigeria, driving greater public engagement and support.
- Public understanding of Nigeria’s Gender Equality Profile has seen a notable rise, fostering a more informed and inclusive society.
- Access to timely information for preparedness, prevention, and response to SGBV cases has greatly improved, enhancing protective measures for women and girls.
- Nearly all states have established effective GEWE coordination mechanisms, with regular reports submitted to the Ministry of Women Affairs and made publicly accessible.
- Most states have established gender desks in MDAs, ensuring a more gender-responsive governance structure.
- Coordination groups have been formed in several states, ensuring consistent reporting to the ministry, with updates shared on a transparent public dashboard.
- Collaboration and synergy between MDAs have been strengthened, creating a unified front for advancing gender equality initiatives.
- Ekiti State has successfully mainstreamed gender in all MDAs, making it a model for gender inclusivity in public administration.
- Stakeholders are now working in closer collaboration, fostering greater unity and shared commitment to advancing gender equality.
- Plans are in place to secure dedicated budgetary allocations for GEWE coordination across the states in Nigeria, ensuring sustained progress and implementation.
- The MWA Data Room situation has seen significant improvements, enhancing data management and accessibility for gender-related initiatives.
- Plans are in place to secure State Trust Fund for Ogun state ensuring sustained support for key initiatives.

The coordination platforms have been instrumental in the much wider reach of UN Women in Nigeria. Since its operations started in the country, UN Women was only able to cover a maximum of 18 States including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja but with the coordination platforms, UN Women is able to cover the entire 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

4.2 Gender-Responsive Budgeting

Institution and Processes of Gender Responsive Budget in Nigeria

Although justified by the high costs of gender inequality to economic growth and development, the use of Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) as a tool to achieve global and regional gender equality goals has seen little progress in the twenty-first century, especially in developing countries including Nigeria. Through analyses of government budgets and the budgeting process, and gender equality outcomes in Nigeria and the selected countries from 2000 to 2020, the contributors show that GRB has failed to gain traction or thrive in developing countries. Using these analyses, the contributors identify critical success factors that are missing in policymaking and planning in the developing world and must be integrated to further facilitate inclusive growth and sustainable development.

GRB is a fiscal tool that can help governments address gender inequality by ensuring that policy and resource allocation are aligned with gender development goals. In Nigeria, however, GRB is not yet mainstream at the federal or state level. Though there have been Non-Governmental Organizations that have worked rigorously to make sure that National Institutions in Nigeria apply this in budgetary allocations.

Here are some challenges and opportunities for gender budgeting in Nigeria:

- **Gender-blind budgeting**
Nigeria's national budget process is often considered gender blind, meaning it doesn't consider the impact of government budgets on men, women, boys, and girls as separate social categories.
- **Limited data**
While there are sources of gender-related data available for analysis, coverage and mainstreaming are still limited.
- **Disaggregated information**
The information published in audit and financial reports is not disaggregated to show spending as laid out in the annual budget.
- **Revenue bases**
Strengthening revenue bases and ensuring that revenue policies contribute to gender equality goals is important for achieving progress.
- **Implicit biases**
There is still scope to take into account implicit biases in indirect taxes in the design of tax systems.
- **Synchronization of actors**
Success in GRB hinges on the synchronization of diverse actors and a collective dedication to advancing gender equality. Nigeria is currently working to develop a policy document in that direction. In the last five years, several civil society actors including Change Managers International Network, 100 Women Lobby Group, and Action Aid Nigeria, have been at the forefront of developing the capacity of primary actors at both National and sub-national levels. For results and impact, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs needs to lead this process.

Some actions that can be taken to improve gender budgeting in Nigeria include:

- Prioritizing funding for gender equality initiatives
- Conducting regular needs assessments to identify the specific needs of women
- Investing in women's empowerment
- Strengthening the informal economy

4.3 Mechanisms for Stakeholders Participation in Implementation and Monitoring of BPfA

The interface between the Government of Nigeria and Civil Society continues to be robust and civil society plays a key role in monitoring the NGP implementation. The National Gender Policy (NGP) identifies *Tracking, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting: to assess results*

including goods, commodities, by-products, and services for gender sensitivity and compliance to agreed performance standards as part of its core principles. The NGP has an embedded integrated and effective monitoring and evaluation system with appropriate and efficient feedback mechanisms. Effective gender equality tracking and benchmarking of progress; regular system-wide assessment of impact is necessary. Hence, monitoring and evaluation an essential strategies and tools for the delivery of the revised NGP. The policy clearly describes an annual reporting mechanism to ensure that there is regular follow-up and review of progress in the implementation of the National Gender Policy. This requires undertaking monitoring and evaluation functions at all levels including gathering information at the national, sectoral, and grassroots levels.

Considering the multi-sectoral nature of gender issues, monitoring is the responsibility of all implementing institutions involved with the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development being responsible for the overall coordination, reporting, and other oversight functions, while the National Bureau of Statistics and other research institutions are critical partners in data collection and management.

Specifically, the policy's monitoring and evaluation components aim to:

- Provide accurate and timely feedback on the effectiveness of Gender Mainstreaming (GM) efforts at federal, state, and LGA levels as well as document best practices at all levels
- Facilitate regular system-wide assessment of the impact of gender mainstreaming initiatives and activities for compliance with policy prescriptions and targets
- Identify possible gaps and review implementation strategies for M&E

Civil society organizations including women's rights organizations and groups are recognized in overarching national development frameworks as a constituency that should form part of every national dialogue, policy formulation, and/or review process. There has been increased engagement with organizations and groups of persons with disabilities in the recent past. They have provided technical support to government-led processes on gender equality and are regularly invited to participate in the monitoring and evaluation of gender equality programmes. The Development Partners Group (Gender DPGG) has also helped to strengthen the interface between multilateral agencies, other government agencies/parliaments and parliamentary committees, Academia, CSOs, and the private sector. The mechanism which is co-chaired by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development allows for critical discussions and information sharing on issues of gender equality and women empowerment.

4.4 Stakeholder Participation in the Preparation of this Report

The process of the national review of the implementation of the BPfA+30 was undertaken with support from UN Women. UN Women hired three consultants to facilitate the review process. The consultants were supported by three research assistants and a data analyst.

A comprehensive literature review was conducted, incorporating information from diverse sources to highlight and document key aspects of Nigeria’s progress toward gender equality and women’s empowerment. This national review integrates evidence-based assessments of the impacts, actions, and achievements realized thus far. Sources consulted include organizational reports detailing national initiatives on gender equality, research publications, survey findings, government policy statements, sectoral performance reports, and prior submissions to CEDAW/BPfA +25. A complete list of references is appended.

An online survey covering 36 states and FCT was conducted, accompanied by consultations with a broad range of stakeholders, including both government and non-government representatives. The following consultative meetings were held:

- CSO Consultative meetings with different sectors of Civil Society organisations working on different thematic areas held on the 18th, 21st, 24th, and 25th, and with WVL partners on the 29th of October 2024
- Consultative meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Women Affairs (State & National) including Mariam Babangida National Centre for Women Development
- DPGG meeting was held on the 22nd & 25th of October 2024
- A Validation meeting for the National Review Report took place on November 11th, 2024. Participants were drawn from MDAs, development partners, UN Agencies, CSOs, academia, and the media.
- Officials from the National Machinery worked with the consultant’s post-validation and supported the harvesting and incorporation of comments from the validation workshop, and filling the missing information gaps in the report.

4.5 National Action Plan on Implementation of CEDAW Recommendations

The National Action Plan on the implementation of CEDAW recommendation is currently not ready. Nigeria is yet to set up a CEDAW implementation committee that is meant to develop the action plan which should be participatory and inclusive in outlook. Though Nigeria has a representative on the global committee. For the future, the current administration has shown political will toward studying the processes closely for more strategic participation.

Section Five: Data And Statistics

5.1 Key Areas of Progress in gender statistics at the national level

In the Beijing Declaration adopted at the Fourth World Conference in 1995 on Women, the participating governments expressed their commitment “to advance the goals of equality, development, and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of humanity”. The National Bureau of Statistics produces an annual Statistical Report of Women and Men, under the requirements of the Beijing Platform for Action and the SDGs gender indicators to assess the success of the previously stated goals. The 2021 edition which was published in January 2023 provides a look at the status of women and men in the country over time, based on statistics

from relevant Federal and State MDAs, and it covers six focal policy areas of the economy: Population, Health, Education, Works, Power and Decision Making, and Violence against Women/Crime (VAW/C).

5.2 National priorities for strengthening national gender statistics

The dearth of disaggregated data along gender, ethnic, linguistic, and religious minority lines in Nigeria is one of the gravest challenges to the promotion of women's rights. This negatively affects planning and implementation policies in Nigeria as regards women generally as women are often excluded from national development and intervention Programmes. The non-utilization of gender statistics deprives gender actors of the evidence to argue for affirmative action and gender-specific concessions and interventions as a strategy for attaining gender equality.

However, it is gratifying to note that the National Centre for Women Development has established a National Gender Data Bank (NGDB) to generate, store, and access gender-specific data as a means of pooling and harmonizing data sources from all sectors of the Nigerian economy into a one-stop referral point. Notably, this process has been hampered in the last few years because of poor funding and support.

The National Bureau of Statistics, which is the government's apex statistical agency charged with the responsibility, among others to produce socio-economic statistics including gender Statistics on a sustainable basis to profile all facets of development has also created a gender Desk to mainstream gender into its data collection instruments and methods; undertake a yearly publication on women and men in Nigeria, and create awareness or gender statistics development in Nigeria.

The gender desk of the Bureau of Statistics has conducted an inaugural yearly workshop on gender statistics development involving Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and other key stakeholders on gender statistics development. Poor funding has also hampered the work of the Gender Unit of the NBS.

In spite of efforts made at producing gender statistics in the country, a lot still needs to be done in the articulation of contemporary global and regional declarations including the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA 1995) and the Sustainable Development Goals (2015 - 2030). Relevant clauses of these resolutions state clearly that profiling the situations of women and men within the same environment and circumstances is the most powerful form of advocacy which brings into policy focus the existing gender gaps that require strategic and targeted policy actions for redress.

5.3 Prioritised Gender-Specific Indicators for Monitoring Progress on the SDGs

Nigeria's 2020 Voluntary National Review (VNR) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focused on the key issues of poverty (SDG-1) and an inclusive economy (SDG-8), health and

wellbeing (SDG-3), Education (SDG-4), Gender equality (SDG-5), and the enabling environment of peace and security (SDG-16), and partnerships (SDG-17). This focus reflects Nigeria's development priorities which are currently embodied in the National Development Plan 2021-2026.

Nigeria's 2017 VNR outlined the institutional dimensions for creating an enabling policy environment for the implementation of the SDGs through its Economic and Recovery Growth Plan (ERGP) (2017-2020) and the current National Development Plan. The focus of these national blueprints on economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development makes it consistent with the aspirations of the SDGs.

SDG3-Health and Wellbeing: While Nigeria has some poor health outcomes, such as high rates of maternal mortality, there have been improvements in the under-five mortality rates (from 157 to 132). COVID-19 has challenged our public health system. A key lesson in protecting the public in times of such pandemics is hygiene and the need to prioritize universal access to clean water and soap. Nigeria's current access to basic drinking water stands at 64%. There must be more investment in public health to ensure the most vulnerable are reached through universal access to essential services.

SDG4-Education: A key challenge confronting the country has to do with Out-of-School Children, a demographic challenge that relates to an interplay between employment (SDG-8), education (SDG-4), poverty (SDG-1), and the digital economy (SDG-17). With a population of approximately 200 million people, regional disparities are significant, with 78% of South Western children able to read full or part sentences, while only 17% of North Eastern children can. With only 1.6% of GDP devoted to education, the country needs to increase the resources to provide quality education.

SDG8-Inclusive Economy: In terms of inclusive economy (SDG-8), Nigeria's informal economy is one of the largest on the continent - estimated at 53% of the Labour force and accounting for 65% of GDP. It is estimated that 75% of all new jobs are informal. Youth have a combined unemployment and under-employment rate of 55.4% or 24.5 million¹. This is the youth bulge that needs to be building the required skills to move into secure and less precarious forms of employment. Ensuring youth are well-educated and able to transition to productive employment through the digital economy can help reduce poverty (SDG-1) and help diversify growth beyond dependence on oil and gas. The Generation Unlimited intervention, which targets employment for 20 million youth is another good example. The banking sector can play an important role in supporting the country's efforts to leverage greater private sector-led growth by providing access to finance, particularly for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). In addition, the Nigerian government can dramatically shift to digitization and strengthen its transition to e-government to facilitate its social protection for the poor and vulnerable population.

Alignment of national planning to SDGs: Good strides have been made in the domestication process of the SDGs in Nigeria. First, there is an ongoing realignment of the National Statistical System (NSS) with the requirements and Indicators of the SDGs. (See [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/SDGs%20Baseline%202020.pdf](https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/SDGs%20Baseline%202020.pdf)). Second, Nigeria has developed its home-grown ‘Integrated Sustainable Development Goals (iSDG Model) - an analytical framework for assessing how policy-making can better address the indivisible nature of the SDGs. Third, Nigeria’s 2020 VNR report has drawn on past evaluations across the Seven priority SDGs and has an ongoing evaluation of the country’s performance in SDGs 3&4. This attempt to systematically use evaluations is an innovation in the VNR context.

5.4 Data Disaggregation Routinely Collected in Major National Surveys

- The Nigeria National Longitudinal Phone Survey (NLPS): is a high-frequency phone survey of households conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics, which was initially designed to follow the same households over time making it a powerful tool for studying and understanding the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. The objective of the Nigeria NLPS Phase 2 is to monitor in real-time how Nigerian households are coping with national and global crises and their effects on the welfare and livelihoods of the households. This survey has become a flexible tool that contributes to filling critical gaps in information that could be used by the Nigerian government and stakeholders to help design policies to mitigate the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the oil prices crises, inflation and global value chain crises, among others.
- The Nigeria Men and Gender Equality Survey (NiMAGES): aims to provide credible information on the realities of gender relations in Nigeria in order to stimulate debate and provide a platform on which to advocate for gender equality. This survey investigated gender-related perceptions and behaviours, focusing largely on the relevant views and behaviour of men. Themes of particular priority included domestic violence, women as leaders, and women’s decision-making roles.
- The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey: is conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics and provides reliable estimates of demographic and health indicators including fertility, family planning methods, breastfeeding practices, nutritional status of women and children, maternal and child health, childhood and adult mortality, women’s empowerment, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, malaria, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), disability, and other adult health issues.

Section Six: Conclusions And Next Steps

- There is progress with women in leadership roles with mentorship and training of over 700 women and girls in leadership and advocacy using Women of Virtue initiatives and Women Leadership Academy for mentoring young girls to begin to venture into leadership roles from secondary schools which is beginning to pay off. Similarly, the Women in Politics Forum has over the past five years trained and mentored over 1000

young women. Some of these women are leaders of processes across the country. Some have boldly contested for local government chairmanship, councillors and others are now working as Special Assistants and Special Advisers to political leaders at National and sub-national levels.

- Promotion of Women's Participation in Politics, igniting the interest of women to vote and to vie for elective positions through training and empowerment at all levels. Bauchi witnessed the appointment of 6 commissioners and the inclusion of women in the decision-making process for the first time in history.
- Increase in female representation in traditional ruling councils across Nigeria including the Federal Capital Territory.
- In Enugu state and part of Anambra state Oji River, more women contested as councillors with some winning and some losing, and more women being admitted to the traditional ruling council.
- Also in Enugu state, young girls are being mentored to run for head girl positions which is an eye opener for them, and they are winning, and this will likely usher them into political space in the near future.
- Improved organizational structure and the ability to run vocational centres and work around organized policies and with success stories of empowering female farmers and artisan groups, impacting them with financial management, bookkeeping, accounting, and providing them with micro-credit for start-ups. The project contributed to organizational growth, the acquisition of office spaces and equipment, and the promotion of accountability and sustainability within various organizations. Some are now registered as legal entities and have their CACs. All these led to significant improvement in women's business and helped to reduce Gender Based Violence cases. Some of the women advocated for affirmative action and networked through platforms. Some earned income through farming, trading skill acquisition, and partnership with other organizations.
- Generally, there is progress in the transformative power of small grants and training opportunities. It was observed that support given to over 100 non-governmental organizations in the past five years through the sponsorship and management of Action Aid Nigeria, resulted in major transformative lifestyles amongst a massive number of women in both rural and urban areas across Nigeria.
- Reduction and management of Sexual Base Violence to an extent though still prevalent in many communities.
- On Women in the media, quite a few women-led media agencies have received support from development agencies, and this has resulted in growth and transformation in the sector. Organizations like the National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), Women Radio, and Women Information Network, now have more recognition and relevance both at national and sub-national levels. With this, Women Radio now runs the Voice of Women Conference (VOW), showcasing the progress of women in urban and rural communities annually with much focus on Women's Political Participation.
- Women are now included in the neighbourhood watch group in the SE and they also serve as gatekeepers and pass information to law enforcement agents.

Challenges

- Violence against women remains a significant issue with a referral made to other organizations due to an overwhelming number of cases being recorded.
- On arms conflict, insecurities affect the ability of women to work and earn income.
- In the South-East, SE, women are affected by sitting at home which affects productivity
- The prevalence of teenage pregnancy and early marriage still exists in some regions, attributing it to social norms and a lack of understanding of women's rights.
- Also, the issue of female genital mutilation, is still prevalent in some parts of the country.
- It has become increasingly necessary for the government of Nigeria to work closely with other critical stakeholders like organized Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Development Partners, and practitioners. This will continue to be the future trend in sourcing lasting solutions to the diverse challenges of the country. In all this, the private sector cannot be left out. There will be a need for regular engagement with the private sector while women will begin to engage the sector in a businesslike manner to attract their interest. Currently, there is an increased partnership with Women in Business (WIMBIZ), Women in Successful Careers (WISCAR), and other women professionals.

Priority actions to accelerate the implementation of the BPfA and the 2030 Agenda, notably as part of the Decade of Action for Sustainable Development

- **Adopting an integrated approach** - A balanced approach should be adopted that combines mainstreaming a gender perspective into all legislation, policies, and programmes with actions specifically targeted at empowering women and girls.
- **Promoting open and gender-inclusive government framework** – An active participation of women and other vulnerable groups to reduce poverty, inequality, corruption, human rights violations, and poor service delivery.
 - Promote the development of gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data in national data banks and ensure the use of such data for policy and planning for national development
 - Deploy necessary mechanisms to protect women, girls, and other vulnerable groups from online harassment, bullying, and hate speech
- **Engaging a wide range of stakeholders** - A wide range of stakeholders should be involved in the process, including civil society organizations, women's organizations, trade unions, youth groups, faith-based organizations, and professional organizations.
- **Involving the media** - The media should be involved in the process through communications campaigns, discussion forums, town hall meetings, and other appropriate platforms that include women's issues and resolutions.

- **Promote economic empowerment** - Prioritize policies and initiatives that promote women's economic empowerment, including access to education, financial services, vocational training, and support for women-led businesses.
- **Improve access to basic social services** - Provide access to basic social services, including education and healthcare.
- **Remove barriers to productive employment** - Remove barriers to women's productive employment.
- **Design and implement effective monitoring and evaluation systems** - Design and implement effective monitoring, evaluation, and accountability systems across levels to ensure gender parity.
- **Nigeria is also committed** to ensuring that climate and environmental crises and disasters that threaten the realization of human rights especially the right to life and dignity, development, a life free from violence and discrimination, an adequate standard of living, education, the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health including sexual and reproductive health, water and sanitation, a healthy environment, participation, and others, with acute and differential impacts on women and girls, in all their diversity, especially in rural, indigenous and migrant contexts. (Based on E/CN.6/2022/3, para 4)
- **Effective use of legislative, and policy measures and mechanisms** – This bridges gender gaps in elective and appointive political positions in public life by adopting gender parity principles as a condition for political parties’ registration by INEC.

Lessons learned from the review process and how it will be applied in continuing implementation of ongoing and future challenges for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in your country

- There is progress with women in leadership roles. Over 700 women and girls have been mentored and trained in leadership and advocacy using Women of Virtue initiatives and Women Leadership Academy, which is mentoring young girls to venture into leadership roles from secondary schools. This is beginning to pay off.
- Promotion of Women's Participation in Politics, igniting women's interest in voting and vying for elective positions through training and empowerment at all levels. Bauchi witnessed the appointment of 6 commissioners and the inclusion of women in the decision-making process for the first time in history.
- Increase in female representation in the traditional ruling council
- In Enugu state and part of Anambra state Oji River, more women contested as councillors with some winning and some losing, and more women being admitted to the traditional ruling council.
- Also in Enugu state, young girls are being mentored to run for head girl positions which is an eye opener for them and they are winning and this will likely usher them into political space in the near future.

- Improved organizational structure and the ability to run vocational centres and work around organized policies and with success stories of empowering female farmers and artisan groups, impacting them with financial management, bookkeeping, and accounting and providing them with micro-credit for start-ups. The project contributed to organizational growth, the acquisition of office spaces and equipment, and the promotion of accountability and sustainability within various organizations. Some are now registered as legal entities and have their CACs. All these led to significant improvement in women's business and helped to reduce Gender Based Violence cases. Some of the women advocated for affirmative action and networked through platforms. Some earned income through farming, trading and skill acquisition, and partnership with other organizations.
- Generally, there is progress in the transformative power of small grants and training opportunities.
- Reduction and management of Sexual Base Violence to an extent though still prevalent in many communities.
- On Women in the media, quite a few women-led media agencies have received support from development agencies, and this has resulted in growth and transformation in the sector. Organizations like the National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), Women Radio, and Women Information Network, now have more recognition and relevance both at national and sub-national levels. With this, Women Radio now runs the Voice of Women Conference (VOW), showcasing the progress of women in urban and rural communities annually with much focus on Women's Political Participation.
- Women are now included in the neighbourhood watch group in the SE and they also serve as gate keepers and pass information to law enforcement agents.

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