The year-long activities marking the 70th anniversary of the United Nations in Nigeria reached a climax on Monday, 30 November 2015, when the Federal Government of Nigeria and the United Nations system in the country organised an anniversary lecture and an exhibition to underscore the strategic importance of the country as a member state of the UN.

Anchored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Government of Nigeria, the event was graced by the crème de la crème of Nigeria’s Foreign Service and the diplomatic community.

Speaking, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator a.i. of the UN system in Nigeria, Ms Jean Gough, expressed the gratitude of the UN to the Government of Nigeria for excellent cooperation and hospitality extended to the 22 UN agencies in the country. ‘The UN commends Government for the efforts to bring to an end to the insurgency in the North East of the country,’ she continued, ‘Since the bombing of the UN House in 2011, the Federal Government has made efforts to complete the repairs to enable our staff go back to the premises. I remain hopeful that the UN House will be completed as soon as possible to enable our staff operate from the premises next year.’

Ms Gough therefore stressed the commitment of the United Nations to continued partnership with the Government and people of Nigeria to deal with the insurgency and eventually restore peace and calm to the society.

Delivering the anniversary lecture titled, ‘Nigeria, Africa and the United Nations: 70 years of collaboration’ former Minister of Foreign Affairs Nigeria Professor Ibrahim Gambari called for the reform and expansion of the UN Security Council to give (Continue on page 2).
greater participation and voice to Africa in the UN organ that has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Prof. Gambari, who is also a former UN Under-Secretary General, added that the UN was far too important to be left to government alone; the opportunities for and contributions of parliamentary associations, NGOs and other Civil Society Group to peace-making and peace building must be considerably enhanced in the next decades of the United Nations existence.

In her speech, Honourable Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Khadijah Bukar Abba Ibrahim, pledged the commitment of the Federal Government of Nigeria to the success of the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the Country while thanking the UN for its developmental and humanitarian support to the government and people of Nigeria.

Other speakers at the event which was held at the Rotunda Auditorium, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Abuja, included Amb. Godwin Agama, Acting Permanent Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs; His Excellency Mr. Paul Arkwright, British High Commissioner and representative of President of the UN Security Council; His Excellency Mr. Torben Gettermann, Ambassador Royal Danish Embassy and representative of President of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly.

The UN@70 Exhibitions, opened by the

UN Nigeria unveils Africa’s longest photo collage to mark UN@70

As part of the activities rounding up the year-long UN@70 events, the United Nations system in Nigeria has unveiled the Africa’s longest and one of the world’s longest photo collage measuring 160 feet long and 10 feet high; and comprising of over 3,234 images including photographs of the United Nations activities (1945 – 2015) and the national flags of UN member States.

The photo images were creatively arranged by Femi Arts Warehouse to read, ‘United Nations @ 70’. Nigeria’s Honourable Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Khadijah Bukar Abba Ibrahim opened the exhibition which also featured the activities of the UN system in Nigeria. The exhibition was arranged according to thematic areas.

On display were the translated copies of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa and Pidgin English languages; UN reports, publications of UN Specialised Agencies, Funds and Programmes. The United Nations Communication Group (UNCG) under the leadership of UNIC Lagos led the planning and implementation of the Exhibition.

The exhibition afforded the UN system to showcase its work in Nigeria especially how it is making impact in the country.
The United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel, Toby Lanzer has said the Nigerian Government requires more support from the international community to enable it address the increasing needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country. In the specific case of Nigeria, United Nations agencies and their partners need about US$200 million to carry out emergency response in the Northeast in 2016.

Mr. Lanzer was speaking in Maiduguri on 20 November 2015 when he toured Dalori and Bakassi camps, where he met with Borno State Governor Kashim Shettima and other state authorities on the second of such a visit to Nigeria’s northeast. Mr. Lanzer was accompanied on the visit by UNHCR Regional Representative for West Africa, Mrs. Liz Ahua, who was also on her second visit, UNHCR Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Mrs. Angele Dikongue-Atangana and Kasper Engborg, Head of OCHA, Nigeria office.

Speaking generally about the Northeast, Mr. Lanzer said though extreme violence is the most visible driver of instability, necessitating the dire need for emergency relief across the Lake Chad Basin, abject poverty and environmental degradation are the root causes of the crisis that plagues the region. He stressed that the political, environmental and developmental causes of the crisis must be addressed with a renewed sense of urgency.

In Adamawa and Borno, Mr. Lanzer lauded the ongoing work by the Nigerian Government and the recent establishment of a Presidential Committee on the Northeast Initiative (PCNI) aimed at developing areas destroyed by violence and achieving long-term solutions for all communities in the region.

Also, Mrs. Liz Ahua, who is a Nigerian national, hailed the Nigerian Government for providing most of the much needed assistance and protection to the IDPs. She, however, said there were still enormous needs, and appealed for more space from the government for all the humanitarian actors in the Northeast.

The visit took place at the time hundreds of schools in the Northeast reopened for the first time in one and a half years, though many teachers and pupils appeared reluctant to return because of persistent violence in the region. About 450 schools have reopened in Borno state since October, more than 18 months after education was halted in the wake of an attack by terrorists on a boarding school in neighbouring Yobe State in which 59 students were killed.

Some schools in Adamawa and Borno states are doubling their number of classes to accommodate school children uprooted by deadly conflicts, as well as for local children, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

The UN officials were welcome by the various field actors in Maiduguri including UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOCHA, IOM,MSF,NEMA, Semaphore NGO, Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), INTERSOS, Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), INTERSOS and other stakeholders.

Response to Nigeria’s Northeast IDPs requires more support

Students exhibit 78 works of arts to mark UN@70

School Arts Exhibition has taken the centre stage in Lagos as seven schools, public and private, converged at the Library Auditorium of the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Lagos to express what the United Nations (UN) meant to them in different artistic forms.

From oil paintings on canvass to pencil drawing, tie-dye, modelling, textile design and waste-to-wealth cultural Industry exhibits, the students put on display a total of seventy-seven (78) creative works of arts which reflect their rich knowledge of the works and purpose of the UN. Curating their works, the students explained the UN as a Peace-keeper, the human rights advocate, a gender equality advocate, an umbrella organisation of all nations and the hope of the people. They also exhibited works that show what the UN does in the area of environment, housing, culture, education and health.

Addressing the students and other participants, the National Information Officer of the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Lagos, Oluseyi Soremekun, conveyed the gratitude of the Centre to the participating schools and urged the students and pupils to continue to learn about the United Nations having earlier made a presentation on ‘UN for school children’.

The one-week Exhibition ended on Thursday 3 December 2015. Participating schools are Covenant University Secondary School, Ota; Intesida Schools, Alagbado; Ojodu Junior Grammar School, Ojodu; Southfield Academy; Sunglee Formation Schools, Awoyaya and The Outliers Schools, Surulere, all in Lagos.
UN/DPI translates SDGs into four Nigerian languages

The United Nations Department of Public Information New York, through its Nigeria’s field office, the UN Information Centre (UNIC) Lagos, has translated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into four Nigerian languages, namely Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and Pidgin English. This is aimed at ensuring deeper understanding of the goals by the peoples of Nigeria. Meanwhile, UNIC Lagos has mainstreamed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its educational outreach activities, so far, over 4,000 students in the Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria have been directly reached through outreach programmes.

Universal Children’s Day: UN reaffirms obligation to children’s future

In observance of the Universal Children’s Day, the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Lagos, in collaboration with Christianah Fate Foundation and the All Nigeria United Nations Students’ Association (ANUNSA), engaged with over 150 primary school pupils from five public schools in Lagos.

Speaking on behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the event held at St George’s Primary School, Falomo Lagos, the Director of UNIC Lagos, Mr Ronald Kayanja reaffirmed the United Nations obligation to do everything in its power to enable all children to survive and thrive, learn and grow, have their voices heard and reach their full potential.

UNIC Lagos Director, Ronald Kayanja addresses the pupils at the event.
Photo: UNIC Lagos/Oluseyi Soremekun
Social Good Summit 2015 in Nigeria focuses on Sustainable Development Goals

To raise awareness around the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations in Nigeria partnered with the Government of Nigeria, One Campaign, Save the Children, UN Millennium Campaign, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Education as a Vaccine and SocialGood Nigeria to hold the Social Good Summit 2015.

“The Social Good Summit is a flagship event for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which we are using as a platform to bring partners at both Federal and State levels as well as grassroots activists to help make the new Global Goals a household name everywhere in Nigeria.” Said Opia Kumah, UNDP Resident Representative.

Opia further called for fearless leadership and broad participation of all Nigerians if the SDGs were to be realized. “Although we all know that the government is the custodian of the national development agenda, citizens’ efforts and support in mobilising the needed resources remain key in delivering development results. The country will only achieve more than it did during the MDGs era if political will is matched with adequate resources; both financial and human.” He added.

With the theme, “New Goals. New power. New technology,” the Social Good Summit in Nigeria brought together a broad spectrum of over 300 stakeholders who discussed the country’s opportunities and challenges as Nigeria and the rest of the world enters the new development era. While underscoring the achievements made in meeting some of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets, the delegates at the Summit highlighted the need for an institutional framework that will ensure effective implementation and successful realization of the SDGs.

Drawing on lessons from MDGs, the Summit highlighted the challenges Nigeria continues to face in tracking development progress largely due to the absence of a widely agreeable source of data. “We will continue to support the Government of Nigeria, through the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), and other relevant institutions, to ensure that it captures and makes available up-to-date data for use in setting baselines and tracking progress during the SDGs era,” said Pa Lamin Beyai, UNDP Country Director, during a panel discussion on harnessing data and technology for realizing the SDGs.

The Government of Nigeria, through the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs (OSSAP) unveiled the country’s MDGs End-point Report as well as its Transition Strategy-from MDGs to SDGs. During the unveiling of the report, Secretary of Programmes, Mr Ochapa Ogenyi, applauded Nigeria’s leadership in implementing and reporting on progress made in achieving the results made during the MDGs era.

In highlighting the commitment being made by the government to ensure early implementation of SDGs, the Ministry of Budget and National Planning stated that the Government of Nigeria had already begun mainstreaming SDGs into its planning processes.

The Social Good Summit in Nigeria was part of more than 100 Social Good Summits organized around the world, most of them during and just after the UN General Assembly in September, to raise awareness around the SDGs. Adopted by all 193 UN Member States, the SDGs are 17 ambitious goals and 169 targets to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice and tackle climate change for everyone by 2030.

Nigeria Marks International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists

Nigeria joined the rest of the world to commemorate the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists at a high level conference organized by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in conjunction with the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) recently at Abuja.

At the conference attended by over 75 participants, Mr. Waberi Edosile, the President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) called on the Federal Government of Nigeria to re-open investigations of killed journalists and in particular the case of Dele Giwa, a journalist and founder of “Newswatch Magazine”, who was killed on 19 October 1986 by a letter bomb, to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

Mr. Edosile listed the journalists who were killed, attacked, kidnapped and detained from 2006 to 2015 and asked for more concrete measures from the authorities to apprehend the perpetrators of these acts. He noted that recent developments in the country have further heightened concerns for the safety of journalists and raised concerns about the large number of media professionals working without insurance.

Ms. Adele Nibona the Culture Specialist at the UNESCO Abuja regional office while delivering the message of the Director General of UNESCO, Mrs. Irina Bokova, urged the nation to take all the necessary measures — through legislation, protection mechanisms, and new adequate resources — to ensure that investigations and trials relating to crimes against journalists are undertaken.

Participants commended UNESCO’s efforts in assisting the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) to set up Monitoring Network on Safety of Journalists in Abuja and in all the 36 State Councils of NUJ. The Monitoring Network objectives include encouraging tolerance of diversity of views on issues and adherence to the rule of law in handling grievances; among others.

Mr. Harry Ogbuche Obe, Special Assistant to the Executive Secretary from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), called on journalists to take advantage of the existence of the Commission to access its services in the 24 out of the 36 States of the Federation. The Commissioner of Police Mr. Adeyemi Ogunjemilusi appealed to journalists to refrain from sensational reporting.
The National Agency of the Control of AIDS (NACA) on 25th November launched guidelines to foster equality between women and men in Nigeria as guaranteed by the country’s constitution.

The Gender and HIV Mainstreaming Guidelines and Capacity Building Manual, prepared with support from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), will assist relevant ministries, departments and agencies to mainstream gender concerns into HIV/AIDS policies, programmes and activities, with particular focus on the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria.

The guidelines provide the key components for making gender mainstreaming operational — including the urgent need for political will, a gender policy, strategy, and budgeting with relevant expertise, and gender units or focal persons for programmes or projects.

“Addressing gender inequalities is a must for Nigeria and Africa’s development. Women are 51 per cent of our population, so they have to be fully involved to ensure a sustainable development of Nigeria and our Continent overall,” said Dr Bilali Camara, UNAIDS Country Director for Nigeria and UNAIDS Focal Point for Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS).

Gender mainstreaming into HIV/AIDS programmes or projects enables careful consideration of issues related to imbalance of power between men and women as a means of finding appropriate strategies for the implementation of activities. It is a globally recognised approach to advancing gender equality and equity in society. It requires incorporating a gender perspective into all policies, plans, programmes and projects to ensure that programme and project benefits impact on women, men, girls and boys in an equitable way.

The guidelines were launched as part of the commencement of 16 days of Activism to Eliminate Violence Against Women as well as the upcoming commemoration of the 2015 World AIDS Day.

“The importance of closing the gender gaps in HIV/AIDS response cannot be overemphasised,” said Dr Grace Ongile, UN Women Representative to Nigeria and Economic Community Of West African States at the launch of the guidelines.

“UN Women is, therefore, confident that gender mainstreaming is gradually becoming an integral part of the overall national development in Nigeria, and hopes these guidelines which address the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria would be accorded paramount importance by all stakeholders in the country,” she said.

According to the Director General of the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA), Prof John Idoko, said the guidelines offered “a firm foundation for providing high quality training, empowerment and capacity” for various government officials who handle gender issues.

Guidelines to mainstream Gender and HIV in government programmes launched

UN, Harpic mark World Toilet Day, donate two toilets to community

“We will forever be grateful for these two toilets. . .open defecation will surely reduce in our community...” the Seriki Hausawa of Idi-Araba Community, Alhaji Idris Lawal Haruna had noted just as another community leader, Alhaji Hassan Auyo excitedly acknowledged that “Our women and men; boys and girls in Idi-Araba community now have dignified toilets to use...”

The above comments captured the mood of participants at the 2015 World Toilet Day activities and the impact the two mobile toilets donated to Idi-Araba community would have on curbing open defecation in the community.

Organised by the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Lagos in collaboration with Harpic, a leading toilet cleaning brand from Reckitt Benckiser, the observance of the World Toilet Day which started with a sensitisation walk and ended with a community briefing session at Idi-Araba Community School complex reached a climax when two toilets donated by Reckitt Benckiser, a UNIC Lagos private sector partner, were handed over to the community.

Speaking on behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the Director of UNIC Lagos, Mr Ronald Kayanja noted that the observance of the World Toilet Day contributed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number six and therefore called on all stakeholders to renew their efforts in providing access to clean water and adequate sanitation worldwide. ‘We must continue to educate and protect communities at risk, and to change cultural perceptions and long-standing practices that hinder the quest for dignity’, he said further. Mr Kayanja thanked the management of Reckitt Benckiser, leaders and members of Idi-Araba community for their support.

In his remarks, the Marketing Director, Reckitt Benckiser West Africa, Mr Oguzhan Silivri released the enlightenment campaign for the World Toilet Day has become necessary because open defecation has a ripple effect to the larger society as it affects the healthy living conditions resulting in increased Child Mortality, Cholera, Diarrhoea in addition to loss of dignity or risk of physical attack and sexual abuse. He observed that the aim of World Toilet Day is to raise awareness about people who do not have access to a toilet, despite the fact that it is a human right to have clean water and sanitation.

Receiving the toilets on behalf of the youths in the community, the President of Idi-Araba Youth Development Association, Mallam Garba Ahmed Idris thanked the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Lagos and Reckitt Benckiser, the manufacturer of Harpic toilet cleaning brand for their gestures.

The observance was put together by UNIC Lagos, Reckitt Benckiser and other NGOs which included Idi-Araba Youth Development Association, Loving Gaze and Female Muslim Doctors.
Nigeria launches measles vaccination campaign, targets 39m children

Nigeria had launched the 2015 Measles campaign in Abuja, targeting the vaccination of 39 million children between 9 and 59 months of age across the country. The two-phase follow-up campaign was implemented in the 19 states of the North and the Federal Capital Territory from 21-23 November 2015, while 28 January-1 February 2016 are the dates reserved for the southern states.

The Minister of Health, Professor Isaac Florunsho Adewole who performed the symbolic ceremony, the first by a serving Minister, stated that Nigeria will “raise the bar in coverage in line with the goals of universal health coverage” as he observed, over “60% of Nigerians are poor and government must take health to their doorstep”.

According to the Minister, it is unacceptable that thousands of children die of measles annually, adding that “no eligible child should miss the opportunity” being accorded by the vaccination. “Therefore, we will join in the campaign of the World Health Organization (WHO), to eliminate measles by 2020”, he added.

Measles is a highly infectious viral disease that leads to significant number of deaths among children in developing countries. Close to 75% of measles cases may have one or more complications such as pneumonia or blindness; particularly in malnourished children.

In a goodwill message and speaking on behalf of partners, Dr Fiona Braka who represented Dr Rui Gama Vaz, the WHO Country Representative, noted that “a measles vaccine has been in use for over 50 years and it is safe, effective and inexpensive”. She stated that, “WHO recommends that every child receives two doses of measles vaccine through the national immunization program.”

Dr Braka commended the Nigeria government in spearheading preparations for the campaign towards measles elimination. “The country has demonstrated strong leadership and partnership in implementing public health strategies for the reduction of child morbidity and mortality”. She added that WHO remains committed to providing the needed technical support towards disease prevention and control, including measles elimination. The UNICEF Country Representative, Ms Jean Gough also graced the campaign flag-off.

UN, MPs set to domesticate the Kampala Convention on IDPs

In the wake of protracted displacement crises in the country, the United Nations Through its Agency for Refugees, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Nigeria House of Representatives have agreed on the need for the Nigerian Government to enact legislations that will domesticate the Kampala Convention on the protection of internal displaced people and other persons of concern.

The consensus was reached at a one-day sensitization workshop jointly organized by UNHCR and the House Committee on IDPs, Refugees and North East Initiatives, in collaboration with the National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS), last 23 November, 2015 at the National Assembly Complex, Abuja. It held under the theme, “The Role of Parliamentarians in Addressing Internal Displacement Challenges in Nigeria.”

Commending the current House of Representatives for its dynamism and renewed commitment to the vision of responding the displacement crises in Nigeria, UNHCR Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Mrs. Angele Dikongue-Atangana expressed satisfaction that at long-last the assembly would pass the enabling acts to domesticate the convention.

Mrs. Dikongue insisted that there was a dire need for the establishment of an effective national protection system, which could address the plight of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), as well as the institution of a national response by developing an appropriate legal framework backed by proper enforcement. “This event offers a unique opportunity for us to examine the internal displacement crises in the Northeast and to highlight the plight of IDPs,” she said.

Speaker of the Nigerian House of Representatives, Hon. Yakubu Dogara, promised that the Legislature would go all out to provide the much needed support in addressing the plight of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Northeast.

Dogara stressed that, as legislators, it was their duty to protect and advocate on behalf of IDPs, who are also citizens with rights to all basic human needs, adding that this was why the lawmakers were compelled to create a standing house committee on IDPs and refugees, especially in the Northeast. He stated that the National Assembly will continue to make valuable contributions to the fight against terrorism and displacements in the country by supporting all budgetary requests from the federal government for such purposes.
A cross-section of UN staff at the venue of the UN@70 Anniversary lecture. Photo: UNIC Lagos/ Oluseyi Soremekun

Some members of the UN Communication Group who organised the UN@70. Photo: UNIC Lagos/ Oluseyi Soremekun

A UN@70 cultural presentation. Photo: UNIC Lagos/ Oluseyi Soremekun

Nigeria’s former Minister of Foreign Affairs & former UN Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs, Prof Ibrahim Gambari delivers the UN@70 Anniversary lecture. Photo: UN Women/ Ikechukwu Attah

The Hon Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hon Khadijah Bukar Abba Ibrahim, delivers the message of the Federal Government of Nigeria on UN@70. Photo: UN Women/ Ikechukwu Attah

FAO Representative, Ms Louise Setshwalo presents a medal to the representative of former President Olusegun Obasanjo who was recognised for his contribution to the fight against hunger. Photo: UN Women/ Ikechukwu Attah

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