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THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF WOMEN AFFAIRS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|--|
| AGEI | Africa Girls' Education Initiative |
| ANC | Ante Natal Care |
| ATA | Agricultural Transformation Agenda |
| AU | African Union |
| BPFA | Beijing Platform for Action |
| BUDFOW | Business Development Fund |
| CBN | Central Bank of Nigeria |
| CCT | Conditional Cash Transfer |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| CGS | Conditional Grant Scheme |
| CHEW | Community Health Extension Worker |
| CLTS | Community-Led Total Sanitation |
| CSIS | Center for Strategic and International Studies |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisation |
| DFID | UK Department for International Development |
| DGD | Democratic Governance for Development |
| DHS | Demographic and Health Survey |
| EMoC | Emergency Obstetric care |
| FEC | Federal Executive Council |
| FGM | Female Genital Mutilation |
| FTTSS | Female Teachers Training Scholarship Scheme |
| FMF | Federal Ministry of Finance |
| FMH | Federal Ministry of Health |
| FMI | Federal Ministry of Information |
| FMOWASD | Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development |
| GBV | Gender Based Violence |
| GEP | Girl Education Project |
| GEWE | Gender Equality and Women Empowerment |
| GOST | Guided Open Space Technology |
| GWiN | Growing Women and Girls in Nigeria |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| IEC | Information, Education and Communication |
| INEC | Independent Electoral Commission |
| LACVAW | Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence against Women |
| LGA | Local Government Area |
| MCH | Maternal and Child Health |
| MDAs | Ministries, Departments and Agencies |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| M & E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |

| | |
|------------|---|
| MSS | Midwives Service Scheme |
| NAP | National Action Plan |
| NAWOJ | National Association of Women Journalists |
| NBS | National Bureau of Statistics |
| NCE | Nigeria Certificate of Education |
| NCWD | National Centre for Women Development |
| NEEDS | National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy |
| NEMA | National Emergency Management Agency |
| NGDB | National Gender Data Bank |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NHIS | National Health Insurance Scheme |
| NIS | National Immigration Service |
| NPF | Nigeria Police Force |
| OPD | Office of the Public Defender |
| PHC | Primary Health Care |
| OSSAP MDGs | Office of the Senior Special assistant to the President on the MDGs |
| PMS | Premium Motor Spirit |
| RUFIN | Rural Finance Institution Building Programme |
| SEEDS | State Economic Empowerment Development Plan |
| SURE P | Subsidy Reinvestment Programme |
| SURE P-MCH | Subsidy Reinvestment Programme on Maternal and Child Health |
| VAPP Bill | Violence against Persons Bill |
| VAW | Violence Against Women |
| VHW | Village Health Workers |
| WEP | Women Environment Programme |
| WOFEE | Women Fund for Economic Empowerment |
| WRAPA | Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative |
| YOU WiN | Youth Enterprise with innovation in Nigeria |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children Fund |
| UNSCR | United National Security Council Resolution 1325 |

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SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW ANALYSIS OF ACIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES SINCE 1995

The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) marked a global watershed in the trajectory of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) worldwide. Twenty years after it was conceptualized and subsequently adopted, the BPFA has continued to provide a comprehensive policy and programmatic guide for achieving the goals of gender equality and human development in Nigeria.

1.1. Major achievements

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

- Institutional arrangements on gender entrenched in Public Administration systems and processes
- Increased participation of women in public and political life
- Integration of gender and social inclusion targets in economic policies, budgets and development frameworks
- Initiatives to partner with men and boys in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women

1.1.1. Institutional arrangements on gender, entrenched in Public sector

In order to sustain the gender specific milestones across sectors, the Federal Executive Council (FEC) approved a National Gender Policy in 2006 (currently under review). This was complimented by a Strategic Implementation Framework and Plan (2008), which provides government, ministries, departments and agencies (MDA's) with practical guidance in gender responsive planning and programming. As a compliment to this, the FEC also approved the establishment of Gender Units in all MDAs, and the appointment of the Directorate Cadre to head these units. Although the modalities for implementing this is still being processed.

1.1.2. Increased participation of women in public and political life

The BPFA has been catalytic in terms of strengthening 'voice' and 'agency' among Nigerian women. There has been incremental participation of Nigerian women in public life over the past two decades and more specifically within the past 8 – 10 years. More women have, within this period, become politically active in Nigeria and have participated at different stages in the electoral process. While challenges still remain when it comes to actually scaling through party primaries, there are now more women consistently involved in the electoral process as party agents, election monitors and in direct contestation for political office at all levels. Generally

women's engagement as aspirants to political office increased from 3.2 in 2003 to 7.58 during the last general elections in 2011, with 500 women actually winning their respective party nominations as candidates for the State and Federal Legislative houses. As at 2011, the Country exceeded the 30% global threshold for women's participation for the first time as female Ministerial appointees made up 31% of the Federal Executive Council.

This surge in women's political participation is due to a number of factors. These include: an emerging policy framework which reinforces the need for women's access and engagement; high level advocacy, and mobilization by the national gender machinery; ongoing advocacy, enlightenment campaigns and training support by civil society; partnerships and collaboration between the national gender machinery, civil society and international organizations.

In order to sustain and also build upon the above successes, a number of institutional and policy mechanisms have been put in place. One of these is the National Gender Policy which provides a 35% minimum threshold for women's participation in politics whether in appointive or elective positions. A Nigerian Women's Trust Fund has been established to provide technical and other resources to female political aspirants. Women's political empowerment offices have also been set up in each of the country's 6 geopolitical zones for purposes of ongoing interface with and support to women politicians in the states and rural areas.

1.1.3. Integration of gender and social inclusion targets in economic policies, budgets and development frameworks

One of the key gender – specific milestones of the period under review is the gradual integration of gender and social inclusion targets in economic policies, development frameworks and government budgets. This marks a significant departure from the prior compartmentalization of gender issues as 'social issues' only, without the extremely critical link to economic justice and empowerment. It also represents a symbolic paradigm shift from 'gender neutrality' in economic policy tone and content to a more gender responsive national development architecture

The National and State Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (NEEDS and SEEDS), which served as economic blue prints between 2003 and 2008 identified gender gaps in their respective situation analyses and policy priorities. Women, youth and other vulnerable groups have been identified as a critical cluster within the National Vision 20:2020 document and the Transformation Agenda. In 2013, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) launched the National Financial Inclusion Framework, which targets the expansion of access to financial services to previously marginalized groups by up to 70% by the year 2020. The 'Growing women and Girls Initiative' (GWiN) was also launched in 2013 as a mechanism of the Government to provide additional budgetary support to Federal Ministries who are able to show concrete spending commitments to women and girls per fiscal year. As at the time of producing this report, five

pilot Ministries at Federal level have benefited from the GWiN programme (FMOWASD, 2014). These are: the Federal Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Information Communication and Technology, Works, Water Resources with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development providing Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) support.

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

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

1.1.4. Involvement of men and boys:

There has been training and capacity building in the field of gender equality and women’s advancement for security agencies with a high male labour force such as the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) and the National Immigration Service (NIS). These agencies have benefitted immensely from a range of training and sensitization on issues of violence against children and women. Within the NPF, training sessions have involved personnel of the highest level, including heads of the police force. (AU Solemn Declaration Country Report, 2013).

Progress in this area has been informed by multi stakeholder collaboration between the national gender machinery, civil society and international partners working towards promoting gender equality as a shared responsibility between men and women.

In order to sustain the impact of these interventions, gender units have been established within the above, while the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, working with UN Women has supported the development of an internal Gender Policy for the NPF in particular.

1.2. Major Challenges:

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

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

1.2.1 Socio cultural barriers

In spite of the fact that gender awareness is increasing, progress towards attaining gender equality is still hindered by deeply entrenched social constructs and cultural beliefs, which sometimes perpetuate gender bias and limit women's access and opportunities. These are particularly challenging because they lead to systemic, pervasive and deeply entrenched discrimination, which influences social institutions as well as the formal and informal rules that regulate kinship patterns, inheritance norms, legal Sharia, and also constitutional laws and policies. (Country Gender Report, 2012)

As part of the process of addressing the above challenge, law reforms have deliberately targeted the passage of gender equality laws at national and state levels respectively. These are discussed in further detail in section 1.4 below. As a compliment to this, there is ongoing legislative advocacy by civil society to ensure that gender equality related bills are passed into law. The National Gender Machinery also periodically engages in high level advocacy and awareness raising amongst gatekeepers of custom in an attempt to negotiate some of the more restrictive socio cultural limitations.

1.2.2. Inadequate Funding

Lack of finance remains a major impediment to the implementation of interventions, which target the closure of gender gaps. Low budgetary allocations and short term donor support have consistently limited the capacity of state and national gender machineries to meet up with their annual targets. This has limited the success rate for achieving agreed gender equality targets.

In order to address this challenge, concerted efforts are being made by the FMOWASD to encourage private sector support for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

1.2.3. Insecurity, Gender violence and conflict

One in three of all women and girls aged 15-24 has been a victim of violence. Women who have never married are more likely to have been attacked than married women. (Country Gender Report, 2012). Research has suggested disturbingly, that violence is endemic in some public institutions, including the police and certain educational bodies, where an “entrenched culture of impunity” protects perpetrators of rape and other violence. These crimes are under-reported and very few cases are brought to court. Fear of violence hinders Nigeria’s development. It not only deters girls from going to school but impacts on almost every aspect of women’s lives as productive and active citizens.

More recently there has been an upsurge of insurgency in parts of Northern Nigeria. Not only will this hinder the realization of national development targets generally, it has the tendency to exacerbate already existing disparate levels of gender equality at regional levels. Already human development outcomes for girls and women are worse in the North, where poverty levels are sometimes twice as high as parts of the South (72% in the North- East compared with 26% in the South-East and a national average of 54%). (Country Gender Report, 2012) Nearly half of all children under five are malnourished in the North-East, compared to 22% in the South-East. Hausa girls, for example, are 35% less likely to go to school than Yoruba boys. The impact of inequality on the lives of girls and women is reflected starkly in health and education outcomes, nationally and between North and South (ibid, at p.10).

1.2.4. Non implementation of some gender specific laws and policies

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

1.3. Reversals/setbacks in progress

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

- Women’s political representation in elective positions
- Non - ratification of some critical Gender Equality Bills
- Non-inclusion of proposed gender specific provisions in constitutional amendments

1.3.1. Women’s political representation in elective positions

The surge in women’s political participation led to incremental proportions of women in elective positions particularly between 1999 and 2007. In the 2007 elections about 1200 women entered the contest, 660 won the primaries while 99 emerged winners at the state and federal levels

(Country Gender Report, 2012). Out of these winners 6 were state deputy governors, 9 senators, 27 were elected to the House of Representatives and 57 won the State House of Assembly seats. At the local council level 27 women emerged local government council chairpersons and another 235 as councilors.

In 2011, the surge in women's 'participation' continued to increase but there was a drop in the numbers of women who won elections (especially to parliamentary seats), at state and national levels respectively. The total number of male and female aspirants was 3306, with 3004 (90%) male and 302 (9.1%) female candidates. Out of this number, 7 women (out of 360 elected members) emerged winners in the Senate and 19 (out of 109 elected members) out won seats in the House of Representatives.

Table 1: Women representation For Elective Positions: Federal to Local Level, 1999 – 2013

Source: Fourth Country Progress Report on the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality, 2013.

| S N | Position | No of Seats | No of Women in 1999 | % | No of Seats | No of Women in 2003 | % | No of Seats | No of Women in 2007 | % | No of Seats | No of Women in 2011 | % |
|--------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------------------|-----------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Presidency | 2 | 0 | 0.00 | 2 | 0 | 0.00 | 2 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 2 | Senate | 109 | 3 | 2.75 | 109 | 4 | 3.66 | 109 | 9 | 7.33 | 109 | 7 | |
| 3. | House of Reps | 360 | 12 | 3.33 | 360 | 23 | 6.38 | 360 | 26 | 7.22 | 360 | 19 | |
| 4. | Governorship | 36 | 0 | 0.00 | 36 | 0 | 0.00 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 36 | 0 | 0 |
| 5. | Deputy Governorship | 36 | 1 | 2.77 | 36 | 2 | 5.55 | 36 | 6 | 16.6 6 | 36 | 3 | 8.33 |
| 6. | 36 States Houses of Assembly | 990 | 12 | 1.21 | 990 | 38 | 3.83 | 990 | 54 | 5.45 | 990 | 69 | 6.26 |
| 7 | SHA Committee Chairperson | 829 | 18 | 2.2 | 881 | 32 | 3.6 | 887 | 52 | 5.9 | 887 | N/A | N/A |
| 8 | LGA * Chairperson | 710 | 13 | 1.8 | 774 | 15 | 1.9 | 740 | 27 | 3.6 | 740 | N/A | N/A |
| 9 | Councilors | 6368 | 69 | 1.1 | 6368 | 267 | 4.2 | 6368 | 235 | 3.7 | 6368 | N/A | N/A |
| Total | | 9,440 | 100 | 1.05 | 9556 | 381 | 3.98 | 9528 | 4.08 | 4.28 | 1,533* | 98 | 6.39 |

This indicates that during the 2011 elections, women lost some of the earlier gains recorded between 1999 and 2007. As shown in Table 1 below, the number of women who won elections as state deputy governors also dropped from 6 (out of 35) in 2007 to 3 (out of 35) in 2011.

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

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

In spite of some measure of progress with gender specific law reforms, there are a number of gender equality related bills that are pending before state and national legislatures. Examples include the Abolition Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women In Nigeria And Other Related Matters Act, 2006; CEDAW & Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa Domestication Bill; the Gender & Equal Opportunities Bill; and A Bill to prohibit and Punish Discrimination against Persons Living with HIV & Other Related Matters 2008. The Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Bill 2003 has been passed by the lower house and is awaiting concurrence by the upper house of the National Assembly.

The return to civilian rule in 1999 also heralded wide spread calls for constitutional reform. Ongoing constitutional review processes have included robust levels of engagement by women focused civil society groups in particular around the insertion of provisions which will facilitate gender equality in Nigeria. One of these is the proposed affirmative action provision which, if included in the constitution, will enable some gains in areas such as women's political representation.

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

1.4. Constitutional and legal developments in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women

There have been a number of gender specific law reforms at national and state level. As shown in table 2 below, most of these reforms have occurred at state level as many states have passed a number of gender equality related bills into law.

Table 2: List of some gender related legislation

| National/State | Name of Law |
|----------------|--|
| National | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Rights Act 2003 • The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Acr, 2003 • The Trafficking in Persons (Prosecution) Law Enforcement and Administration Act 2005 |
| State | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enugu State Of Nigeria, Prohibition of Infringement of a Widow's and Widower's Fundamental Rights Law No.3, 2001 • Rivers State Abolition of Female Circumcision Law No. 2, 2001 • Edo State Female Circumcision and Genital Mutilation (Prohibition) Law No. 4 of 1999 • Oyo State Widows' Empowerment Law, 2002 • Anambra State Malpractices against Widows and Widowers (Prohibition) Law 2004 • Bauchi State Withdrawal of Girls from Schools for Marriage (Prohibition) Law No 17 of 1985 • Ogun State Female Circumcision and Genital Mutilation (Prohibition) Law 2000 • Women's Reproductive Rights Law of Anambra State 2005 • Edo State Law on Safe Motherhood • Rivers State Law on Reproductive Health 2003 • Delta State Law on Female Genital Mutilation • Ekiti State Malpractices against Widows & Widowers (Prohibition) Law, 2005. • Harmful Traditional Practices Law of 2003, Rivers State. • Schools Rights (Parents, Children and Teachers) Law, No 2, 2005, Rivers State. • Street Trading Restriction Law, 2004, Anambra State • Gender and Equal Opportunities Law (Anambra State) 2007(passed by parliament, awaiting governor's assented) • Gender and Equal Opportunities Law (Imo State) 2007 • Gender and Equal Opportunities Law (Kogi State) 2013 • Imo State Violence against the Persons Law No. 2 2012 • Enugu State HIV/AIDS Anti-Discrimination, Stigma & Protection Law 2007. • Cross River State HIV/AIDS Anti-Discrimination, Stigma & Protection Law 2007. • Legislations prohibiting early marriage (Kebbi and Niger States); • Retention in schools and Against withdrawal of Girls from schools (Kano, Borno, Gombe and Bauchi States); • Edo state Law against Trafficking. • Ekiti state Violence against Women Law • Lagos State Administration of Estates (Small Estate Payment Exemption) Law, 2005. • Child Rights Laws passed in 24 out of 36 States. • A Law to Prohibit Girl-Child Marriages and Female Circumcision No.2 of 2000 by the Cross Rivers State Government. • A Law to Prohibit Domestic Violence against Women and Maltreatment of Widows. No.10 of 2004 by the Cross River State Government. • Ebonyi State Protection against Domestic Violence Law No. 003 of 2005. • Edo State Inhuman Treatment of Widows (Prohibition) Law 2004. |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ebonyi State Abolition of Harmful Traditional Practices Against Women and Children Law No. 10 of 2001 • Ekiti State Equal Opportunities Law, 2013 |
|--|--|

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

The percentage of the national budgets awarded to the national gender machinery has remained consistently below 10% of the total federal budget within the period under review. However, there have also been several allocations per sector for interventions that were designed to address gender specific issues. These include: support for the reduction of maternal mortality in the health sector budget; funding for the training and input support to women farmers in the agriculture sector.

As part of the process of boosting government spending on gender equality and women's empowerment, the GWiN initiative was established in 2013 with 3 billion Naira startup funds to support 5 pilot Ministries (see 1.3. above).

In order to ensure transparency and ease of access to budgetary information to the general public, quarterly budget implementation reports as well as the actual budget documents are regularly published on the website of the Federal Ministry of Finance.

1.6. Government/Civil Society Interface

The interface between the Government of Nigeria and Civil Society has improved over the past decade and has grown noticeably robust within the past five years. The National Gender Policy (NGP) identifies interaction between government and civil society as one of its four key principles. The Policy provides in section 3.1.1. That: 'strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including civil society shall form part of the government's broad delivery strategies'. Following the return to civilian rule in 1999, civil society and government began to interface more constructively. The former are recognized in overarching national development frameworks as a constituency that should form part of every national dialogue, policy formulation or review process. 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 interface between government and the private sector in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women is only recently emerging. In 2013 private sector support enabled the production of the country centenary report on gender while the 2014 Women's day celebrations received partial support from some private sector organizations. Advocacy is ongoing to promote increased private sector involvement in this area of work.

1.7. Bilateral Cooperation, Knowledge Management, Information sharing, and Monitoring.

Within the period under review, the FMOWASD has worked towards an improved research, documentation and dissemination regime. This has involved the creation of thematic data banks, strengthened media interface and the publication of periodic internal reports. These efforts have also been complimented by civil society's documentation of experiences, milestones and best practices. These improved documentation and information sharing practices have led to increased positive reporting of women's contributions to national development and achievements in the Media (FMOWASD 2012).

The Ministry's social mobilization and advocacy campaigns are carried out using Guided Open Space Technology (GOST) methods where participants are allowed to moderate and drive group discussions in order to encourage ownership and interaction. In addition to the use of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials, media activities are also employed through the Television. A national gender data bank containing sex disaggregated data from different sectors was also established in 2009.

The annual 'Committees of Women in Parliament' has created a platform for female parliamentarians to coalesce, share experiences, build alliances with male champions of change and call for more parliamentary slots for women.

Nigeria has also signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOU's) on women empowerment and gender equality with several international partners and other countries such as South Africa, the Gambia, Mali and Poland (2013 National Ministerial Platform Report). These agreements are extremely valuable as they provide frameworks and opportunities for cross – country collaborative efforts and exchange programmes on issues relating to women, economic development, Child Rape and Trafficking, Child Labour, Girl-Child Education and Care for Persons with Disabilities, and juvenile justice administration. The country participates regularly in global, regional and sub-regional review meetings and also shares context specific trends through periodic implementation reports to the United Nations and the African Union.

1.8. MDGs influence on implementation of the BPF

In addition to MDG 3 (on gender equality and the empowerment of women) the MDGs framework created additional space for political and extra - budgetary support towards the closure of gender gaps in a number of sectors (health, education and agriculture). As a reflection of Governments strong political will towards realizing the MDG targets, the coordination of the MDGs was situated within the Presidency at the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on the MDG's (OSSAP – MDG's). The OSSAP MDGs has its own annual budgetary allocation and collaborates with the respective MDG sectors to design and implement targeted interventions. They also coordinate the conditional grants scheme which provide counterpart funding support to states for purposes of implementing MDG programmes. This approach has led to marginal improvements across a number of indices at both state and national levels.

The 2010 MDG Country report indicates that under-five mortality has fallen by over a fifth in five years, from 201 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2003, to 157 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2008. In the same period, the infant mortality rate fell even faster, from 100 to 75 deaths per 1,000 live births. Recent interventions – including Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses – that reflect the underlying causes of child deaths, have contributed to these successes.

There has been rapid improvement in youth literacy, from 64.1 per cent to 80 per cent between 2000 and 2008 (Country MDG report 2010). There has also been a gradual improvement in the proportion of girls enrolled in primary school, even though there are still fewer girls than boys in school. Maternal mortality fell by 32 per cent, from 800 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2003 (at the time one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world) to 545 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2008 (NDHS, 2008). However, the proportion of births attended by a skilled health worker has remained low and threatens to hold back further progress. An innovative Midwives Service Scheme was initiated in 2009 with support from the OSSAP – MDG's and managed by the National Primary Health Care Development Agency. The scheme, which has been widely accepted as a good model has contributed immensely to the dropping figures in maternal deaths in different parts of the country. If the scheme is expanded in proportion to the national gap in the number of midwives, this will further accelerate progress. In addition, more mothers will be covered by antenatal care as access to quality primary healthcare improves and incentives attract healthworkers to rural areas, indicating that Nigeria will turn progress to date on this goal into a MDG success story (*ibid*).

In 2006 a National Gender Data Bank, was established by the National Centre for Women Development with support from the OSSAP – MDG's and UNICEF. The data bank is essentially designed for compiling numerical data relating to critical indicators of gender growth into specially designed computer programmes. Even though there is still a lot of room for improvement with respect to the collection and collation of sex disaggregated data, the National Gender Data Bank is the very first of its kind in Nigeria and represents a critical milestone in progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

SECTION TWO: PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION SINCE 2009

Area of Concern 1: Women and Poverty

In spite of a number of efforts to reduce feminized poverty in Nigeria, poverty among women remains a major challenge with various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure a sustainable livelihood. Traditions, customs, sexual stereotyping of social roles and cultural prejudice continue to militate against women's assertion of their socio-economic rights and full participation in national development. Apart from its feminized nature, poverty in Nigeria is also marked by disparities across geographical zones (Country gender report, 2012). Human development outcomes for girls and women are worse in the North, where poverty levels are sometimes twice as high as parts of the South: 72% in the North-East compared with 26% in the South-East and a national average of 54%. (*ibid*). Nearly half of all children under five are malnourished in the North-East, compared to 22% in the South-East. Also, more women are located within the formal sector in Southern Nigeria than in the North, and that the rate of female entrepreneurship in the micro sector is higher in the more industrialized States of the South (36%) than in the North (23%). While this can be attributed to the geopolitical disparities in literacy rates, it also suggests that many of the opportunities for microenterprises are linked to the formal manufacturing sector (*ibid, at p.12*).

With 21% women participating in the non-agricultural paid labour force, and women owning 15% of existing bank accounts, Nigeria has one of the lowest rates of female entrepreneurship in sub-Saharan Africa (Amadi, 2012). As at 2009, the World Bank estimated that women run only 20% of enterprises in Nigeria's formal sector. Out of this estimate, 23% are situated in the retail sector, 37% in the garment industry with a very poor representation in the wood, metals, chemicals, construction, and transport industries (World Bank, 2010)

The manifestations of chronic poverty among women therefore remains a critical concern, as this has an adverse impact on women's employment, their health status, access to credit, ownership of land and property, participation in politics and other decision – making processes. Tackling feminized poverty will ensure Nigeria's economic growth, sustainable human development, material prosperity, peace and social progress. Equitable access to decent employment opportunities is also of particular importance for rural women, as a means to ensure their families' livelihoods and well-being, promote their own economic and social empowerment, and contribute to the growth of their communities.

Gender inequality in land, property and inheritance make women vulnerable to poverty by rendering them economically insecure and distorts their access to public goods and services that improve well-being. Gender discrimination over land and property rights is a key factor

contributing to gender disparity, with resultant low agricultural production, food shortages, unemployment, widespread poverty, poor health and hunger for women, their households and communities. Without official title to land and property, Nigerian women have fewer economic options and virtually no collateral for obtaining loans and credit for economic activities (ICRW, 2008). Lack of collateral hinders women from accessing credit through informal and semi-formal credit institutions despite the high volume of credits at these institutions (Okojie *et al.*, 2010).

The Nigerian government has made significant gains since the adoption of the BPFA as part of the institutional framework for the development of women and the girl child. A number of credit facilities have been established to benefit female entrepreneurs. Examples of these include:

- i. *Public Works and Women/Youth Empowerment Scheme (PW/WYE). Programme.* This is a component of the Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Programme (SURE P) does not disburse direct funding to beneficiaries. Its focus is to create employment opportunities for women and youth in labour-intensive public works and is expected to generate 50,000 skilled jobs and 320,000 unskilled job opportunities(FMI, 2012)
- ii. *BUDFOW and WOFEE*
In 2003 the FMOWASD, in collaboration with the Bank of Industry and the Bank of Agriculture established 2 (women only) micro credit funds: the Business Development Fund (BUDFOW) and the Women Fund for Economic Empowerment (WOFEE). As at 2012, these initiatives had provided funding support to an estimated 6,200 women business cooperative groups (Federal Ministerial Platform Report, 2012).
- iii. *Women component of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Fund (MSMEDF)*
In 2012, the Central bank of Nigeria (CBN) set up a N200 billion Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Development Fund to provide cheap and long-term financial resources for the development of the MSMEs sector in Nigeria (CBN, 2012). The CBN has proposed that 60% of this fund should target women entrepreneurs, when implementation commences.
- iv. *Youth and Women in Agric business Investment programme:* This programme has provided raining and agri business startup support to 2,421 women/girls across 17 agricultural value chains, since 2012.
- v. *The establishment of the Small holders' women farmers' organization of Nigeria (SWOFON):* This platform was established in response to the demand for more women cooperative groups to engage emerging economic reforms and opportunities. SWOFON has enables access to agricultural input by over 300,000 women subsistence farmers within the last five years.
- vi. *Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria Initiative (YOU WiN)*

In 2011, President Goodluck Jonathan established a 50 billion Naira (USD\$315 million) special job creation fund in 2011 as a core component of his administration's economic transformation agenda. YouWiN is an annual business plan competition that seeks to create jobs by encouraging creativity and entrepreneurship among the youth. The initiative is also supported by the Federal Ministries of Youth Development, Communication Technology, Women Affairs and Social Development as well as the World Bank, Department for International Development, UK (DFID) and other private sector partners.

In 2012, the YOU WiN initiative was restricted to women only due to the low turnout of women winners of the grant in the first phase of the scheme. According to reports, women comprised only 17% of the beneficiaries of that phase. (DFID, 2012)

- vii.* Growing Girls and Women in Nigeria (GWIN) project is an initiative of the federal government of Nigeria to empower hard to reach women and girls in the country. Five (5) Ministries - Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Works, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Communications, are the implementing ministries piloting the G-WIN project. These ministries seek out innovative approaches to reach out to the poorest girls and women by enhancing the already existing opportunities and opening more support and increase the number of girls and women gainfully employed.

The GWiN initiative Growing Girls and Women in Nigeria (GWIN) has empowered 2000 Girls and Women, since its take off in 2013. GWiN has enabled the pilot sector is enumerated above to conceptualize targeted interventions to benefit women and girls. These interventions include improving access to farmlands, provision of portable water in some rural communities and the provision of ICT training to young women and girls. Other interventions include capacity building on processing, packaging and marketing of farm products, and the establishment of skills acquisition centers for women in each of the six geopolitical zones.

Furthermore, agricultural sector policies have increasingly focused on harnessing agriculture, agro-allied industries and small and medium enterprises for poverty reduction, employment creation and economic growth. Currently, the main sector strategy targeting poverty reduction is the Federal Government's Agricultural Transformation Agenda, comprising the Growth Enhancement Scheme, the Value Chain Development Programme and the Nigeria Incentive-based Risk-sharing Agriculture Lending Scheme is in place.

- Under the Agricultural Transformation Agenda, the Federal Government seeks to create over 3.5 million jobs within the rice, cassava, sorghum, cocoa and cotton value chains and to generate over USD 2 billion of additional income for Nigerian farmers where Nigerian women are mostly engaged. It is expected that national food security will be boosted with the addition of 20 million tonnes of food supply by 2015, including rice (2 million tonnes), cassava (17 million tonnes) and sorghum (1 million tonnes).
- The sector approach is complemented by the implementation of targeted programmes and interventions including conditional cash transfer, the National Directorate of Employment, the national poverty eradication programme and the subsidy reinvestment programme (SURE-P).
- SURE-P is a 'special' intervention promoting growth and reducing poverty, unemployment and vulnerability, through critical investments in infrastructure and social safety nets. The social safety net projects include maternal and child health, community services/women and youth employment programmes, an urban mass transit programme, vocational training schemes and water and agriculture projects. Infrastructure development projects include preventive maintenance projects for roads and bridges and information and communication technology projects.
- In addition to the programmes and interventions of the Federal Government, the state governments are taking their own measures to tackle poverty and unemployment in their respective jurisdictions. Some of these measures are within the framework of the MDGs conditional grant scheme (CGS) implemented collaboratively by the federal, state and/or local governments, with coordination by the OSSAP-MDGs.
- In Zamfara State, for example, the CGS skills acquisition programme is training and achieving gainful employment for 30,000 youths in various agricultural and agribusiness enterprises. So far, the programme has produced 5,000 trained youths and supported some of them with land, inputs and working capital for enterprise development covering irrigated farming, horticulture, poultry production, animal production, fisheries, forage production and artificial insemination.
- Similarly, the Bauchi State Commission for Youth and Women Rehabilitation and Development (BACYWORD) has trained 261,000 youths and women in various entrepreneurial development programmes such as fish farming, computer literacy, waste management. Over N450 million interest free loan to be disbursed to graduates of the training through financial institutions.

In 2013, the FMWOASD, working with the Federal Ministries of Education and Labour as well as civil society groups, with the support of international partners (such as Action Aid) formed a coalition to focus on advocacy around unpaid care work in Nigeria and how to integrate that into mainstream national economic discourse.

There have also been various forms of micro level support for women entrepreneurs at state levels. These include the establishment of 6 cottage industries in Ekiti, Abia, Cross Rivers, Delta and Sokoto states respectively (Federal Ministerial Platform Report, 2012).

Despite the improved efforts at expanding women's economic opportunities, there are still a number of challenges. These include:

- Low financial literacy and awareness among women.
- Eligibility criteria often so stringent that they tend to exclude a lot of the women from accessing existing opportunities for financial support
- Low levels of participation by women in the development of guidelines for accessing credit support leads to the emergence of eligibility guidelines that tend to restrict rather than expand women's access
- Large numbers of women entrepreneurs are situated at 'cottage industry' level and many of the existing support excludes this level of business from accessing their funds
- Micro finance banks who can provide support to women who do not qualify for other support charge high interest rates (7 – 8 % per month) and this further excludes potential female beneficiaries
- Many existing opportunities tend to (directly or indirectly) emphasize formal education within the eligibility criteria thereby excluding the 36% Nigerian women without formal education but who may otherwise qualify for the available support

In October 2012 the CBN launched its financial inclusion strategy which aims to ensure that a clear agenda is set for increasing both access to and use of financial services in Nigeria by the year 2020. The Financial Inclusion strategy presents a roadmap for increasing financial Inclusion in Nigeria from 36% to 70% by 2020. By this policy the CBN makes a commitment towards ...

'Ensuring that the concerns and inputs of all stakeholders are considered before regulations and policies are set for Financial Inclusion in Nigeria.

Civil society groups have also engaged in a series of activities to educate, enlighten and inform women and the society at large on the need for social safety nets as well as gender equity in access to economic opportunities.

In order to eradicate poverty, achieve economic growth and sustainable human development, women and men need to participate fully and equally in the formulation of macroeconomic and social policies and strategies for the eradication of poverty. The quest to eradicate poverty cannot be accomplished through anti-poverty programmes alone but with application of gender analysis, democratic participation and changes in economic structures in order to ensure access of all women regardless of status to resources, opportunities and public services.

As a country, Government is mindful of the need for more action to reduce poverty among women; reverse the trend in the feminization of poverty, raise the educational levels and health standards of women and girls including establishing stronger protection for the rural women in the area of socio-economic and political life. In line with the present administration's transformation agenda, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development is committed to the passage of Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill as a means to further enhance women's equal access to economic activities and resources including land, credit, science and technology, vocational training, information, communication and markets.

Area of Concern 2: Education and Training for Women

In spite of notable milestones in closing gender gaps in the education sector, gender inequality in education has remained a perennial issue in Nigeria and the achievement of equal status in educational attainment by men and woman remains a key national development target.

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

Policies and interventions towards improving women's access to education received a tremendous boost over the past eight years (2007-Date). Comparison of data of 2002 to 2013 shows that budgetary allocation to education sector had witness a gradual increase as indicated in Table 10.1 below. The lowest allocation of N75.71 billion was in 1999 (4.46%) while the highest was in 2013 when education sector was allocated 509.04 billion naira which represents 9% of the total budget

Table 3 Nigerian budgetary allocation for education sector between 1999 and 2013

| Year | Allocation | Year | Allocation |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 2002 | 75.71 billion | 2008 | 252.20 billion |
| 2003 | 93.77 billion | 2009 | 339.63 billion |
| 2004 | 147.84 billion | 2010 | 393.81 billion |
| 2005 | 195.69 billion | 2011 | 426.65 billion |
| 2006 | 221.07 billion | 2012 | 468.39 billion |
| 2007 | 250.14 billion | 2013 | 509.04 billion |

www.finintellmagazine.ngr.com, 2014).

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

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

In a bid to elevate the standards of girl child education, the Federal Government has also launched the policy framework on Girls and Women Education. The Federal Government of Nigeria, in partnership with UNICEF and other development partners have been working to promote girls education and various initiatives have been undertaken including the Girls Education Project (GEP) geared towards promoting and enhancing girls' participation in education. The GEP was inspired by an earlier initiative, the African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI) delivered through UNICEF and its government partners and funded by the Norwegian Government.

This intervention recorded remarkable progress including a 28% increase in Girls' enrollment rate and an 80% decrease in drop-out rates for girls in the intervention schools. AGEI emanated from the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) and led to the establishment of the Nigerian Girls' Education Initiative (NGEI) whose main aim is to improve the quality of life of girls in Nigeria through a collaborative approach to their education, with strong networks with CSOs and Federal and State governments.

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

Furthermore, in order to address the shortage of teachers in the rural primary schools, the female teacher-training scholarship (FTTSS) award scheme was instituted in 2008. The FTTSS Scheme was introduced through a partnership between the state and local governments, the Girls' Education Project (GEP 2) and UNICEF, and it targets four northern states of Nigeria— Bauchi, Katsina, Niger and Sokoto. The primary focus is to incentivize young women from marginalized areas (particularly remote rural areas) who are qualified to study for the Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE) but are unable to do so due to funding constraints, lack of information and the

means to apply for admissions. Selected candidates are funded through the scheme to undertake the three-year teacher-training course at the state college of education, leading to the award of the NCE. Successful candidates agree to return to their rural communities to teach in primary schools. The scheme began in the 2008/2009 academic session with a total of 674 female candidates. As of 2011, a total of 3,246 candidates are pursuing their education under the scheme. The State and local governments have progressively increased their financial support to the scheme, from 454 students (67 per cent) in 2008/2009 to 2598 students (80 per cent) in 2010/2011. The success of the programme has been demonstrated by high and improved retention rate of young women currently enrolled in the course. A follow-up initiative is planned to assess and address the rate of absorption into the teaching force by the government and to follow up their impact in enrolment and retention of girls in schools in the rural areas.

The Nigerian Government has also initiated a number of key policies, which target improved access to education for women and girls. These are enumerated in table 3 below:

Evolving Education Policies

With regard to women's education, the evolution of education policies in

Nigeria since the 1980s shows some clear patterns. Table 3 summarizes some of the key initiatives.

Table 4 Key policy initiatives with a gender focus in Nigeria.

| | | |
|---|------|--|
| Blueprint on Women's Education | 1986 | Expanded educational opportunities for women; discouraged withdrawal of girl children from school. |
| Nomadic Education Programme | 1986 | Provided primary education to children of nomadic pastoral communities. |
| National Commission for Mass Literacy and Non-formal Education | 1991 | Reduced illiteracy by encouraging children to attend school; established functional literacy centres for women. |
| Family Support Basic Education Programme | 1994 | Encouraged families in rural areas to accept education for girl children as a way to enhance child health and youth development. |
| Universal Basic Education | 1999 | Boosted enrolment by ensuring that all children of school going age had access to primary and junior secondary education. |
| National Policy on Women | 2001 | Enhanced access by locating facilities close to communities; enhanced teacher recruitment; provided incentives for girls to study maths and science. |
| Education For All - Fast Track Initiative | 2002 | Increased support for basic education. |
| Strategy for Acceleration of Girls' Education in Nigeria | 2003 | Led to the launch in 2004 of the Girls' Education Project; focused on an integrated approach to achieving gender parity. |
| National Economic | 2004 | A poverty reduction strategy that enhanced the integration of |

| | | |
|---|------|---|
| Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) | | women in national development by increasing their capacity to participate in the economy and in employment. |
| Universal Basic Education Act | 2004 | Provided pre-primary education; confirmed universal right to primary and early secondary education. |

Source: Country gender report, 2012

Table 5. National summary of primary school statistics 2004-2008.

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Total schools | 60,189 | 60,189 | 54,434 | 54,434 | 54,434 |
| Total enrolment | 21,395,510 | 22,115,432 | 23,017,124 | 21,632,070 | 21,294,517 |
| Total male Enrolment | 11,824,494 | 12,189,073 | 12,575,689 | 11,683,503 | 11,483,943 |
| Total female Enrolment | 9,571,016 | 9,926,359 | 10,441,435 | 9,948,567 | 9,810,575 |
| Total teachers | 591,474 | 599,172 | 586,749 | 468,202 | 586,930 |
| Total male Teachers | 291,384 | 294,434 | 323,798 | 241,826 | 300,931 |
| Total female Teachers | 300,090 | 304,738 | 262,951 | 226,376 | 285,999 |
| Total Classrooms | 254,319 | 254,319 | 319,590 | 319,590 | 319,590 |
| Teacher/pupil Ratio | 36 | 37 | 39 | 46 | 36 |

Source: Country gender report, 2012

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

Area of Concern 3: Women and Health

Nigeria has an impressive policy framework for health and there is growing awareness of the need for gendered spending in the health sector. Concern of government over the years has been on ensuring a reduction in the country's high maternal mortality rates. The 2013 Country MDG Acceleration Strategy report indicates that there has been a decline in maternal mortality between 1999 and 2012: from 1,100 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 350 in 2012. In spite of the notable decrease, there is still room for a lot of improvement. This need for accelerated action led, in 2013 to the development of a National '*MDG acceleration framework, in maternal health*'.

This framework recognizes the underlying factors behind these figures including: ignorance and apathy by women and the society; inadequate preparation for any emergency before, during and after delivery; as well as poor or delayed access to adequate emergency obstetric care (EmOC) and the absence of sufficient facilities that are free at the point of delivery. Other factors are tied to the individual tendencies of the mothers themselves including maternal age, educational attainment, socio-economic status and antenatal attendance. Poor socio-economic development, weak health care system and socio-cultural barriers to care utilization are also contributory. Where family resources are scarce and women lack autonomy and mobility, young women may feel unable to make the decision to seek costly treatment. 34% of women cited this as a reason for delaying treatment (FMH, 2011).

In recognition of the need for a more holistic approach to addressing gender disparities in health sector access and opportunities, the Nigerian government, in 2012 also launched the '*Saving One Million Lives by 2015 Programme*', which aims to expand access to essential primary health care services for women and children (Country CEDAW report, 2013/2014). It's expected that this initiative will become the new yardstick for measuring health sector performance in Nigeria. The initiative is focused on evidence-based, cost effective interventions that are proven and address the leading causes of morbidity and mortality. The Initiative comprises of several components, which will contribute to saving one million lives (WHO, 2012). These are:

- **Improving Maternal, Newborn and Child Health** through delivering an integrated package of interventions at thousands of primary health care clinics with referral links including skilled healthcare provider
- **Improving routine immunization coverage** and eradicating poliomyelitis.
- **Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV**; through increased access to quality HIV testing and counseling to mothers; treatment of infected mothers; and exploring feasibility of universal access to HIV treatment to all those infected.
- **Scaling up access to essential medicines** for previously marginalized groups
- **Malaria control**; through an increase utilization of bed nets and effective anti - malarial medicines;
- **Improving child nutrition**

Signs of Momentum at the Federal Level

Despite general frustration with Nigeria's maternal health indicators, a number of public health experts interviewed by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) team pointed to incipient developments that offer hope of more rapid progress. The findings of the 2008 DHS, combined with the approach of the MDG deadline, have helped galvanize greater action by the federal authorities. The federal government has over the years signed on to a host of international declarations on reproductive health, and maternal health has featured as a prominent element in successive governments' national health pledges and strategies.

- There is currently a National Health Bill, before the National Assembly for passage into law. This Bill delineates more clearly the roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local government and directs 2 percent of Nigeria's considerable oil revenues to primary health care.

- A National Health Insurance Scheme was established in 1994 and remains functional till date. The NHIS has had some impact within the formal sector even though there are still challenges with community health coverage.
- In 2004, with concerted civil society lobbying of the National Assembly, the Ministry of Health was able to secure for the first time a budget line for reproductive health, with specific funding for safe motherhood.³
- In 2006, when Nigeria negotiated elimination of \$18 billion in national debt, \$53 million of the federal Debt Relief Fund was directed to building primary health infrastructure and strengthening training and procurement for maternal and child health.⁴
- **The last five years have seen an acceleration of these efforts, with an emphasis on building capacity among states and LGAs on maternal health.** The National Primary Health Care Development Agency in 2009 launched the Midwives Services Scheme (MSS), funded through the Debt Relief Fund, to ensure higher quality care at primary health clinics, particularly rural facilities in underserved LGAs.

Intended as a partnership among the three tiers of government, the MSS initiative deploys newly qualified, unemployed, and retired midwives to rural communities for one-year stints. Midwives are posted to selected primary care facilities that have the capacity to provide basic essential obstetric care, “clustered” around secondary care facilities that can provide emergency obstetric care. Salaries are paid by the federal government, supplemented by an additional stipend from state governments and accommodation provided by LGAs.⁵ To date, 4,000 midwives have been deployed to 1,000 primary health care centers.

- The Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Program (SURE-P) account, established with monies accrued through the partial removal of public fuel subsidies in January 2012,⁷ has given an added boost to maternal health efforts. The federal government has committed to set aside 15 billion Naira (approximately \$95 million) of SURE-P funds for maternal and child health.⁸ Funds are intended to support an ambitious expansion of the MSS program that will add 500 health facilities to the 1,000 already covered by MSS and eventually deploy 2,000 more midwives, 2,000 community health officers, 6,000 community association workers, and 9,000 village health workers.
- One of such programmes is the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) that is targeted at rural and sub-urban poor pregnant women. Cash payments are made to poor households on the use of ANC and postnatal care.
- SURE-P MCH provide free immunization, health education on safe motherhood and key household practices, free caesarean section in designated referral general hospitals in case of complication and free delivery items such as sanitary pads, bathing soap, liquid antiseptic, baby wrap, linen, cord clamp, hand gloves, laundry soap and mucus extractor.

- The SURE-P MCH programme is targeted at increasing both supply of health care facilities and demand by users. It has generated significant increase in the uptake of services at PHC centres in communities hosting them.
- Progress report in 2013 indicated that 223,786 pregnant women have received ANC, 28,435 deliveries were taken by skilled birth attendants and 19,514 new acceptors of family planning have been recorded in the SURE-P supported PHC centers.
- The programme is guaranteed through a memorandum of understanding between the federal government with all the states of the federation and the local governments where each was assigned roles and responsibilities.
In the area of capacity building, a total of 6,720 midwives, Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWs) and Village Health Care Workers (VHWs) were trained and/or inducted. Women, especially in relation to maternal health, are the main beneficiaries along with infants and children.
- At the July 2012 London Summit on Family Planning, a high-profile international conference of key donors and partners, the Nigerian delegation announced a government commitment to increase spending for reproductive health commodities from \$3 million annually to \$11.35 million annually for four years, an almost 300 percent increase.¹⁰ Just one week later, the National Council on Health approved a policy of task-shifting that would allow CHEWs to provide injectable contraceptives outside of health facilities, a move that had faced considerable resistance among some higher-skill cadres of health professionals. The recommendation, which also encourages state ministries of health to scale up the practice, is considered a major breakthrough in expanding access to reproductive services, particularly in those areas where skilled professionals are scarce.¹¹
- President Jonathan was selected as co- chair of the UN Commission on Life-Saving Commodities for Women and has publicly expressed his strong commitment to both family planning and maternal health. In May 2011, the government began distributing family planning commodities to state governments at no cost, with the expectation that they would be distributed to LGAs and health facilities free of charge.

These initiatives, along with consistent, high-level, public pronouncements on maternal health, have generated a sense of momentum and opportunity.

Area of Concern 4: Violence against Women

Violence against women manifest at different levels and in varied forms. These include domestic violence, harmful traditional practices, rape and sexual harassment to mention a few. The threat and exercise of violence underpin and enforce the gender subordination and unequal powerrelations that result in the poor outcomes experienced by girls and women in Nigeria (WRAPA, 2004; Mahdi, 2011).

There is a certain level of stigmatization and fear that characterizes issues of gender based violence due to deep rooted socio cultural perceptions. These tend to reinforce fear and shame on the part of the victims and have further exacerbated the dearth of reliable data in this area. In recent documentation, the Legislative advocacy Coalition on Violence against Women (LACVAW) indicates that up to a third of women in Nigeria report that they have been subjected

to some form of violence, including battery and verbal abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, marital rape, sexual exploitation, or harassment within the home (Nigeria NGO Coalition, 2008).

Table 6: Showing levels of physical violence against women in Nigeria Source: NDHS, 2008

| Background characteristic | Percentage who have ever experienced physical violence since age 15 ₁ | Percentage who have experienced physical violence in the past 12 months | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---|-----------|--------------------|-----------------|
| | | Often | Sometimes | Often or sometimes | Number of Women |
| Current age | | | | | |
| 15 -19 | 26.7 | 1.8 | 14.4 | 16.2 | 3,865 |
| 20 – 24 | 28.2 | 1.7 | 12.7 | 14.4 | 3,881 |
| 25 – 29 | 30.0 | 1.9 | 14.1 | 16.0 | 4,201 |
| 30 – 39 | 27.4 | 1.9 | 13.0 | 14.9 | 5,718 |
| 40 – 49 | 25.9 | 1.8 | 11.5 | 13.4 | 3,802 |
| Employed past 12 months | | | | | |
| Not employed | 23.2 | 1.3 | 11.6 | 12.9 | 7,726 |
| Employed for cash | 28.1 | 1.9 | 12.6 | 14.4 | 10,938 |
| Employed not for cash | 38.4 | 3.2 | 19.8 | 23.0 | 2,752 |
| Missing | 26.4 | 3.8 | 13.1 | 16.9 | 52 |
| Marital status | | | | | |
| Never married | 33.2 | 1.5 | 14.0 | 15.5 | 4,705 |
| Married or living together | 25.1 | 1.7 | 13.0 | 14.7 | 15,852 |
| Divorced / separated/ widowed | 44.0 | 5.7 | 11.7 | 17.3 | 910 |
| Number of living children | | | | | |
| 0 | 30.0 | 1.5 | 13.0 | 14.5 | 6,094 |
| 1 -2 | 27.3 | 2.0 | 12.7 | 14.7 | 5,665 |
| 3 -4 | 26.1 | 2.1 | 13.2 | 15.3 | 5,110 |
| 5+ | 26.8 | 1.9 | 13.7 | 15.6 | 4,598 |
| Residence | | | | | |
| Urban | 30.2 | 2.0 | 12.7 | 14.7 | 7,592 |
| Rural | 26.3 | 1.7 | 13.4 | 15.1 | 13,875 |
| Zone | | | | | |
| North Central | 31.0 | 2.5 | 17.5 | 20.0 | 3,176 |
| North East | 19.7 | 2.1 | 12.5 | 14.6 | 2,859 |
| North West | 13.1 | 0.5 | 5.9 | 6.4 | 5,446 |
| South East | 29.6 | 2.2 | 13.4 | 15.6 | 2,501 |
| South South | 52.1 | 3.0 | 20.9 | 23.9 | 3,342 |
| South West | 28.9 | 1.8 | 13.4 | 15.1 | 4,146 |
| Education | | | | | |
| No education | 14.9 | 1.3 | 8.6 | 9.9 | 8,033 |
| Primary | 35.6 | 2.8 | 17.4 | 20.2 | 4,308 |

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------|------|-----|------|------|-------|
| Secondary | 36.5 | 2.2 | 16.6 | 18.8 | 7,268 |
| More than secondary | 30.1 | 0.7 | 9.5 | 10.2 | 1,858 |
| Wealth quintile | | | | | |
| Lowest | 18.8 | 1.4 | 11.3 | 12.7 | 4,177 |
| Second | 21.3 | 1.8 | 10.9 | 12.7 | 4,123 |
| Middle | 29.3 | 2.0 | 14.0 | 16.0 | 4,075 |
| Fourth | 34.1 | 2.2 | 15.7 | 17.9 | 4,361 |
| Highest | 33.7 | 1.8 | 13.6 | 15.4 | 4,732 |

The above table indicates that one in five women has experienced some form of physical violence. Women in the ‘never married group’ are more likely to have suffered physical violence than women who have been married. Women in urban areas are also more likely to have experienced violence than those in rural areas. The highest proportion of women who experience physical violence is found in the South-West and South-South. The North-East and North-West report relatively fewer cases of domestic violence (Country Gender Report, 2012).

A number of efforts are ongoing at national and state levels to address the issue of violence against women. Some states of the federation now have laws on domestic violence or gender based violence such states include Lagos State, Ekiti State etc.

History was made in Nigeria in March 2013, when the 360 member House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria passed the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Bill (VAPP Bill). The VAPP Bill aims to eliminate, or reduce to a minimum, the cases of gender based violence in Nigeria. The key gains in the new law include a more comprehensive definition of rape, harsher sentences for rape and other sexual offences, compensation for rape victims, institutional protection from further abuse through restraining orders and a new fund to support the rehabilitation of victims of violence. Covering a tragic spectrum of violence, including female circumcision, domestic violence, early forced marriage, rape (including marital) and harmful widowhood practices, the Bill aims to recognize the rights of all to safety both in the workplace and the home. The Bill expressly recognizes the right to physical and psychological integrity in times of peace and in areas of conflict.

Other efforts at addressing gender based violence (GBV) include:

- the establishment of shelters for victims and survivors of GBV. This has been initiated at both governmental level by the FMOWASD and its counterparts at the state level and at non - governmental level by women focused civil society groups in different parts of the country.
- The National Gender Policy of 2006 (presently undergoing review) and similar policies in states like Ekiti, Jigawa as well as institutional based gender policies like that of the Nigeria Police Force, Independent Electoral Commission (INEC)
- the Child Rights’ Act which has been passed into law by 24 out of 36 States; the Draft Sexual Harassment Policy for Educational Institutions by Federal Ministry of Education;

the Policy prohibiting Sexual Harassment in the Work place by Federal Ministry of Labour.

- various organizations are mobilizing men and boys to reduce GBV and promote gender equity and equality. The Ebonyi Men's Resource Centre (EB-MRC) which is hosted by Daughters of Virtue and Empowerment Initiative (DOVENET) has a network of men, allied with women, acting as role models in violence prevention and positive masculinity. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is mobilising young men in different parts of the country through the Young Men Network on GBV. The UN women also has a network of male champions on VAW.

Area of Concern 5: Women and Armed Conflict

This thematic area has gained increased significance within the country context within the past two years due to a surge in armed insurgency and conflict in some parts of the country. Given the emerging trends, extensive research and analysis of underlying causes and dynamics is still required.

Prior to the period referred to above, a number of interventions at the levels of policy and practice had emerged in response to the identified gender issues within this area. These have focused mainly on addressing the institutional arrangements for promoting gender sensitivity in security sector operations. An example of this is the development of a National Gender Policy by the Nigeria Police Force, training on gender for security sector agencies and the intake of more young women as trainees within the Regular Service Training programmes of the Nigerian Defence Academy (Federal Ministerial Platform Report, 2013).

Within the past two years, individual states especially in parts of Northern Nigeria where sectarian conflicts have been widespread have initiated programs targeted at promoting peaceful coexistence and conflict mitigation. For example, Kaduna State in 2011 set up a Peace and Reconciliation Committee whose report is being considered and steps taken to implement recommendations. Other committees have been set up at Federal level to propose entry points for addressing rising insurgencies in Nigeria with special attention being paid to the vulnerability of women and girls and how that can be addressed within the country context.

In 2012, Nigeria developed a National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325 in response to the mandate of the United Nations Security Council that State Parties (Governments) implement UN Resolution 1325. As part of the process of implementing the NAP, the FMOWASD, CSOs and international partners are currently setting up trauma centers to provide psycho-social services in conflict affected areas.

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 form of holding the government to ransom for the demands by militants in the region. But this evolved into a

moneymaking business and is now at a staggering scale. Since 2007, it has become a terrorist tactic and unfortunately targeted at women and children. The abduction of girls in Borno by insurgents is of great concern. In March 2014 about 25 girls were kidnapped and in April, over 200 girls from Government Girls Secondary School Chibok were kidnapped from Chibok Local Government in Borno state. About 40 were reported to have escaped and reunited with their parents, leaving more than 200 remained unaccounted for as the school reported. These abductions have caused a major setback to girl child education in Nigeria. Reports also claim that the insurgents have kidnapped several women earlier; a few who returned have gruesome stories around violations of their bodily integrity to tell (Zenn & Pearson 2014:1-5, Ariyibi *et al* 2014, HRW 2013:1-10).

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is increasingly working from a participatory perspective with women in affected flashpoint locations through the Ministry for Women Affairs. The publication of the National Action Plan to support women's role on conflict prevention and peace building provides a guide to building lasting peace. Inter - religious roundtables led by women in conflict communities show that women are a key resource for diffusing conflict and for its transformation to peace.

Even though women still form less than 10% of senior level cadre within the security sector, the glass ceiling within the sector was broken in 2010 with the appointment of the first female naval Admiral (equivalent ranking to a two star general) in West Africa, Rear Admiral Itunu Hotonu.

Area of Concern 6: Women and the Economy

Women contribute to the economy and to combating poverty through both remunerated and unremunerated work at home, in the community and in the workplace. In spite of these contributions however several gender specific disparities exist as far as the country's economic indices are concerned. Nearly six million young women and men enter the labour market each year but only 10% are able to secure a job in the formal sector, and just one third of these are women. Significant rural-urban differences in income distribution impact particularly on women, because 54 million of Nigeria's 80.2 million women live and work in rural areas, where they provide 60-79% of the rural labour force. (Country Gender Report, 2012).

Though many women are involved in subsistence agriculture and off farm activities, men are five times more likely than women to own land. Women own 4% of land in the North-East, and just over 10% in the South-East and South-South (ibid). Land ownership and land tenure give women security and provide a key to access other resources and opportunities. The level of provision of social services in Nigeria is generally less than the demand for these services. Ultimately the impact of these inadequacies on women is greater because they are primary managers and caregivers at the household level and therefore often have to bear the burden of coping under very difficult circumstances.

Some of the key gender features in relation to the Nigerian economy were highlighted in the 2012 Country Gender Report and are reproduced below:

Nigerian labour markets are gendered. A majority of those in formal employment are men. NBS data (2010a) confirm that in 2007 only 32.5% of women were employed in the (non-agricultural) private sector.

Women run only 20% of enterprises in the formal sector (World Bank, 2009: 92). 23% of these enterprises are in the retail sector. Women make up 37% of the total work force in the garment industry. They are very poorly represented in the wood, metals, chemicals, construction, and transport industries. In general the report finds that more women are in the formal sector in the South than in the North, and that the rate of female entrepreneurship in the micro sector is higher in the more industrialized States of the South (36%) than in the North (23%). This suggests that many of the opportunities for micro-enterprises are linked to the formal manufacturing sector.

Limited opportunities for employment and a rather small medium-scale enterprise sector have meant that micro or informal enterprise has become a default strategy for many Nigerians. A majority of the 43% of women cited as economically inactive make their living through micro-enterprises. The recently completed “2010 Access to Financial Services in Nigeria” shows that owning a business has become the main source of income for 19.5 million adult Nigerians (EFInA, 2011). 23% of the respondents in this survey indicated “own business” as the main source of income, ahead of farming (18.7%) and wage employment (12.6%). The importance of micro-enterprises as the main source of income makes it a strategic area for the empowerment of women. Recent work (World Bank, 2009: 92) shows that women in the micro-enterprise sector tend to be better educated, and that more of them report vocational and graduate education compared to men. There are suggestions that barriers to both formal employment and opportunities for formal enterprise may in part explain this (Kwakwa *et al.*, 2008). Also, ethnographic work suggests that women play an active role in market associations (Porter *et al.*, 2010).

Access to finance and a fairer tax regime

Data from the NBS (2009) show that men are twice as likely to secure finance compared to women. In 2007, for example, some 20,098 men accessed loans compared to 8,550 women. About 64% of the N528, 251 of disbursed loans went to male applicants.

Women’s access to land, a key productive asset, is limited by patrilineal inheritance (from father to son). Recently, the right of women to land received a boost with a landmark judgment by the Supreme Court. In the case of Onyibor Anekwe & Anor v. Mrs. Maria Nweke, the Supreme Court held that Nigerian customs which disinherit women are repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience and should therefore not be allowed to stand. The court

therefore declared as repulsive the custom of the Awka people in Anambra State which allows married women to be disinherited upon the death of their husband because they did not have a male child for the late husband. A widow, Mrs. Maria Nweke, had in 1991 instituted a case at the Awka Division of the Anambra State High Court.

Among other claims, she asked the court to declare that she was the person entitled to statutory right of occupancy of a parcel of land situated at Amikwo village. She also urged the court to restrain the defendants from trespass on the said land. The defendants, Onyibor Anekwe and Chinweze, were the descendants of Anieke Nwogbo, the half-brother of the plaintiff's husband, Nweke Nwogbo. The plaintiff's said that she inherited the portion of the property given to her late husband upon his death shortly before the civil war. She further stated that the defendants asked her to vacate the house on the grounds that she had no male child in the house. She stated that she had six female children. The trial court and the Court of Appeal ruled the case in favour of the plaintiff. The defendants were dissatisfied and appealed to the Supreme Court. Even though, the defendants acknowledged the fact that the plaintiff had six female children, they argued before the court that a woman without a male issue in Awka had no right of inheritance of any land except the one she purchased with her money.

In dismissing the appeal, Justice Clara Ogunbiyi said the issue to be decided was "whether the respondent (plaintiff) who had no male child can inherit the property of her late husband?" She held that the appellants had not given any credible evidence to overturn the judgments of the two lower courts.

Justice Ogunbiyi held:

"I hasten to add that the custom and practices of Awka people upon which the appellants have relied is hereby out rightly condemned in very strong terms. "A custom of this nature in the 21st century societal setting will only tend to depict the absence of the relatives of human civilisation. "It is punitive, uncivilised and only intended to protect the selfish perpetuation of male dominance which is aimed at suppressing the right of the women folk in the given society.

"One would expect that the days of such obvious differential discrimination are over.

"Any culture that disinherits a daughter from her father's estate or wife from her husband's property by reason of God instituted gender differential should be punitively dealt with. "The punishment should serve as a deterrent measure and ought to be meted out against the perpetrators of the culture and custom. For a widow of a man to be thrown out of her matrimonial home, where she had lived all her life with her late husband and children, by her late husband's brothers on the ground that she had no male child, is indeed very barbaric, worrying and flesh skinning."

She also berated the lawyer who represented the appellant for coming to court to argue

that such an obnoxious customs be upheld.

Justices Tanko Muhammad, Muhammad Muntaka-Coomasie, SylvesterNgwuta and Olukayode Ariwoola agreed with the lead judgment.

Also in the month of April 2014 Justice Bode Rhodes Vivour of the Supreme Court of Nigeria in the case of **Lois Chituru Ukeje vs Mrs Gladys Ada Ukeje** declared thus:

no matter the circumstances of the birth of a female child, such a child is entitled to an inheritance from her late father's estate. Consequently, the Igbo customary law which disentitles a female child from partaking in the sharing of his deceased fathers estate is a breach of section 42(1)(2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, a fundamental Rights provision guaranteed to every Nigerian. This said discriminatory law is void as it conflicts with section 42(1)(2) of the said Constitution. In the light of what I have been saying the appeal is dismissed.

These landmark decisions are a major boost to the legal environment for the protection of the rights of women and girls in Nigeria. With these judgments many more women will be bold to come forward and challenge situations of injustice and because they are Supreme Court decisions, no court can legally give a contrary judgment.

Women are significantly under - represented in secure wage employment in both the private and public sectors. Those who have formal sector jobs are constrained by the reproductive roles they play. As a result, the majority of women occupy low level posts that offer them the flexibility they need to manage their households while working in the formal sector. They spend most of their time doing unpaid household work.

As part of Government's efforts at addressing gender disparities in economic participation and access, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, in 2012 launched the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA). The ATA focuses on empowering subsistence farmers in order to ensure that:

- There is improved food security in Nigeria
- More farmers move from subsistence farming to agri - business

Within the context of the ATA, women and youth have been designated as a separate pillar and several forms of training and input support have been provided to this cluster. The aim of adopting this approach is to promote the production, storage, processing and marketing of agricultural commodities through the full involvement of women stakeholders in the agricultural sector. Other related interventions within this sector include the designation of annual cropping

seasons for women in agriculture as well as the distribution of agricultural inputs and agro-processing equipment directly to women groups instead of through the middle men.

In order to boost income, food security and general living conditions of poor rural households, particularly female headed households, the government of Nigeria designed the Rural Finance Institution Building Programme (RUFIN). It is a seven year programme currently being implemented in twelve states of the federation. It is estimated that about 346,000 families, of which at least 138,000 (40 percent) female headed households will benefit directly from the programme (FMWASD, 2012:34).

Furthermore, the Labour Standards Law, which was passed in 2010, includes a 16-week maternity leave provision for women in the federal public service as well as the private sector. This is in line with Convention 183 (Maternity Protection Convention, 2000) which recommends a **minimum** of 16 weeks maternity leave for women.

Area of Concern 7: Women, Governance, Power and Decision Making

This thematic area has also been covered in 1.1.2 of this report.

The process of ensuring increased women's involvement in governance, power and decision making is still work in progress, even though there have been significant gains over the past two decades. Nigerian women constitute about half of the population of the country. But despite their numerical strength and active participation as campaign agents, mobilizers and most faithful voters at every election, they have always faced challenges and resistance when efforts were made by them to participate in politics or to be politically empowered (Federal Ministerial Platform Report, 2012). Table 1 above provides information on the number of women elected to public office from 1999 to 2011.

There have been notable milestones with respect to women in appointive positions particularly within the past five years. In 2011, female Ministers made up 31% of the Federal cabinet. At the level of the Judiciary, the Chief Justice of the Federation and the President of the Court of Appeal are women. 16 out of the 25 recently appointed Judges of the Court of Appeal are also women; while 3 women were appointed justices of the Supreme Court for the first time in the country's history in 2012. Also, 6 female judges were appointed to the National Industrial Court in 2011. (Federal Ministerial Platform Report, 2013). Within the past five years, Nigeria has also recorded marginal increments in the numbers of women appointed as ambassadors (10 female Ambassadors) and permanent secretaries (11 female Permanent Secretaries).

As part of efforts to encourage more women to participate in politics, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, in collaboration with the OSSAP MDGs established a Women's Trust Fund to provide support to female politicians bidding for elective offices. This Fund was launched in 2011, with the sum of N100 Million (\$600,000) to assist women that are

interested in active politics. The focus of the fund is to make grants to female aspirants towards financing specific campaign activities, enabling leadership skills development, conducting research and generating information as well as for carrying out gender equality related advocacy activities. The support from the Fund enabled more women to participate in the 2011 elections as contestants for various offices.

Civil society and groups especially the women focused NGO's, have continued, with support from international partners to invest time and resources towards activities such as training, advocacy and mobilization for increased women's participation in electoral processes. Also, in response to ongoing advocacy efforts, many political parties have institutionalized fee waivers for women intending to compete in general elections.

Area of Concern 8: Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

Some of the concrete steps taken by Nigeria to ensure an enabling institutional environment for the advancement of women have already been discussed at different parts of this report.

These include progressive judicial decisions, development of a National Gender Policy, the passage of the Violence against Persons Bill by the National Assembly; as well as the passage of different gender equality laws by some states. Apart from ongoing law and policy reforms, the Federal Executive Council, in 2011 approved for the establishment of Gender Units in all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), and the appointment of the Directorate Cadre to head such units. Another laudable effort is the passage of the Childs Right Act into Federal law in 2003 and its subsequent domestication by 24 states. Also the coming into effect of the Universal Basic Education and other related matters Ac of 2004 has ensured that access to primary education by the girl child will remain a national development priority.

Many Northern states like Kano, Borno, Niger, Gombe, Bauchi and many more have enacted laws to prohibit

- Street trading, hawking and street begging
- withdrawal of girls from school
- Child labor, trafficking and all forms of abuses or violence
- Sexual exploitation of girls/women
- Harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage
- Fundamental rights of the girl-child to health, education, survival, and participation
- Girl-child disinheritance

(Refer to table 2 above)

Lagos state has been on the lead in translating the contents of Child Rights Act into activities. To this effect, a '*Yellow Card against Child abuse*' has been introduced in Lagosto deter erring parents and inform them of the child's right to education .This has helped to reduce the number of children on the streets of Lagos, especially during school hours. In Ekiti, Rivers, Anambra and

Lagos states, Offices of the Public Defender (OPD) and the Directorates for Citizens Rights respectively, have been established within State Ministries of Justice. The OPD offers free legal services to poor and underprivileged women whose rights are threatened or have been infringed. The Ekiti State government has further drafted an “anti-discrimination law” which is awaiting passage by the state house of assembly.

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.

Table 7: Existing policies and frameworks, which support implementation of different provisions and principles of CEDAW.

| S/N | NATURE | TITLE |
|-----|---------------------------------------|---|
| | LAWS | Already covered in Table 2 above |
| | POLICY | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender policy for the National Police Force - Nigeria Police Force, September 2012 (awaiting Strategic Framework for Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation) 2. Jigawa State Gender Policy, A Holistic Approach Towards Women Development, May 2013 3. Ekiti State Gender Policy, 2011 4. National Policy on Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria (2008). 5. National Assembly passed the HIV and AIDS Anti-Stigma and Discrimination Bill. |
| | IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORKS/ GUIDELINES | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Strategic Framework and Plan for VVF Eradication in Nigeria (2005-2010) 2. National Strategic Framework on the Health and Development of Adolescent and Young People in Nigeria –Federal Ministry of Health (2007-2011) 3. National Health Strategic Development Plan 2010 – 2015 4. Strategic implementation framework for the national policy on protection and assistance to trafficked persons in Nigeria (2011) 5. National plan on women and girls, Gender equality and HIV 2010,2015 |

Other major challenges have to do with ingrained customary practices, acceptance of discrimination as a cultural norm and the use of violence to maintain patriarchal hegemony. The gender specific paradigms which have resulted from these limitations will require sustained advocacy over a period of time, in order to ensure notable gender equality shifts in Nigeria.

Area of Concern 9: Human Rights of Women

Women's visibility and expression of 'voice' within the context of governance in Nigeria dates back to pre-independence days when women's demands for certain civil, social and political entitlements were very closely linked to their robust involvement in the Nation's economy. The advent of civilian rule in 1999 brought with it renewed awareness of human rights in terms of their meaning as well as their implications for governance and for national development. It was during this period that issues pertaining to women became contextualized and integrated within the broader demand for rights based approaches to governance even though women's issues had been a part and parcel of the National narrative before this time.

Some of the more rampant cases of women's human rights abuses in Nigeria involve rape, forced marriage, domestic violence and harmful traditional practices (NHRC, 2008). In 2012 the annual Human Rights Watch report identified Violence against Women (VAW) within the context of sectarian violence as making up the top category of human rights infringements in Nigeria. The 2012 report also underscored the high incidence of maternal and child mortality as well as ongoing challenges with environmental remediation as some of the gender specific violations of the rights to life and dignity of Nigerian citizens. However many of the breaches in women's human rights are underreported and therefore not documented especially in the area of economic social and cultural rights. For many of these ECOSOC rights, issues such as patriarchy and cultural norms tend to limit women's access and opportunities even as the national law and policy context does not leave much room for redress or remedial action when there have been breaches. This is a major deficit within Nigeria's architecture for the protection for rights protection as more women by virtue of their roles as primary care givers and managers at the micro level are affected when ECOSOC rights are not enforced.

As highlighted in other parts of this report, Nigerian women have made remarkable progress over the past centenary. Some of these accomplishments have been realized with support at some levels from national, regional and international bodies and in some cases with the support of male change champions in different positions. Stronger 'voice' and 'agency' among groups of women have continued to ensure that women's perspectives remain a part of the national discourse across different sectors even as women continue to make slow but steady progress towards the assertion of their rights to political participation and representation

Nigeria has ratified 9 out of the 13 core 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)

The African compliment to the 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 as a way of providing further clarity to what exactly the state is expected to do in order to prevent and also eliminate discrimination against women.

In spite of the non-domestication of CEDAW and the Protocol to the AU Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa, however the country has domesticated the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights as part of her national legal framework through the Ratification and enforcement Act of 1983 contained in Chapter 10 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990. This Act adopted all the provisions of the AU Charter without any modifications including Article 18(3) above. This implies both national and regional accountability for eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and children in Nigeria. The 1983 Ratification and Enforcement Act provides further basis for successful litigation in cases where there are allegations of discrimination against women.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN) remains the major reference with respect to human rights in Nigeria generally and women's human rights in particular. The CFRN covers many of the rights that are identified within both 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 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.

Women's predominant roles at the level of the care economy and at micro level situate large numbers of them within the social sector where the rights outlined in chapter 2 apply most. The inability therefore to enforce these rights is a minus as far as the advancement of women's human rights in Nigeria is concerned. However, it is instructive to note that while the rights in chapter 2 are non - justiciable they are clearly linked with the civil and political rights contained in chapter 4 which can be demanded in a law court. The right to life (chapter 4) for instance is inexorably linked to access to healthcare (the right to health in cap 2) and environmental rights (also in cap 2). This is a link that has to be made more clearly through judicial precedent as more women focused NGOs need to continue to institute legal action for the enforcement of women's social and economic rights as provided for in chapter 2.

So far, some of the positive actions taken by the Nigeria government at national level to ensure the protection of women's human rights (FMOWSD, 2011) include:

- The Adoption of a National Gender Policy in 2007 which provides sector specific guidance in terms of gender related planning and programming within Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).
- The Adoption of the Trafficking in Person's (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act;
- Ensuring a minimum age of legal consent for marriage by virtue of the Child Rights Act (section 21)
- Establishment of a National Agency for the prohibition of trafficking in persons;
- Adoption of a National Policy on HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and female genital mutilation.

As shown in table 2 of this document, several states have also passed a number of gender equality bills into law

Other Institutional mechanisms which currently exist in order to safeguard and also advance the human rights of men and women in Nigeria include: the National Human Rights Commission, the Legal Aid Council, and the Directorate for Citizens' Rights which has been established in some states.

The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development has oversight over the situation of Nigerian women and this also covers monitoring and documenting the human rights situation of women and girls. In order to improve the women's rights regime in Nigeria a number of policy and practice changes need to occur. The FMOWASD requires increased funding support to be able to track and document women's human rights cases more regularly; the private sector needs to become more engaged in supporting work around this issue at some level; women in the academia also need to work with women focused civil society groups to collate and document cases of abuse regularly. Ongoing stakeholder engagement with community gatekeepers and religious leaders is critical in order to demystify and also contextualize women's human rights in Nigeria. In addition to all of this the Nigerian government needs to domesticate its regional and international commitments on women's human rights.

Area of Concern 10: Women and the Media

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

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

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

The Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), established 25 years ago, stands as a key pillar in the efforts to increase women access and leadership in the media. With its focus on encouraging women to become journalists and to support the development of existing journalists

to become respected members of their newsrooms, NAWOJ plays a critical role in ensuring that Nigeria's media has a strong and active female contingent. NAWOJ has also become a focal within some interventions by national and international partners. For instance the UNDP Democratic Governance for Development (DGD II) project began a strong working relationship with NAWOJ in 2012 and has focused since then on building their capacity to not only encourage women to become journalists, but also to consolidate their efforts in bringing gender issues into the national limelight and into electoral processes. Part of this engagement includes targeted training for women journalists on how to cover issues that have not traditionally been assigned to women, such as defence and finance.

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

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

The social media remains a veritable tool for mobilization of citizens especially young people who have access to ICT to organise and drive advocacy. This is currently being explored at different levels to mobilise especially young people against GBV by raising their level of knowledge on such issues and creating platforms for them to speak out on issues of violence against women in the Country. The UNFPA is one of the in-country organisations driving efforts at using this medium to reach young people. However the rural youth continues to be excluded due to infrastructural challenges.

Area of Concern 11: Women and the Environment

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

The impacts of climate change, whether they are gradual changes on natural resources and agriculture or more cataclysmic events like flood, are felt differently by women and men. For instance in Nigeria, some wells are drying up, forcing women and children to travel further to collect water and firewood. Women's strategies for adapting to water insecurity include harvesting rainwater and purchasing water from vendors. (*Celebrating Momentum and*

Milestones: A WEDO History of Women's Organizing Toward a Healthy and Peaceful Planet.). As has been noted elsewhere in this report, Nigerian women also do most of the agricultural work, and are therefore affected by weather-related natural disasters impacting on food, energy and water. Also increased climate variability appears to be contributing to the pace and intensity of the feminization of agriculture, because one of the consequences of climate variability one observes is the out migration of most of the able bodied male members. This has implications on food productivity, land use policies, extension approaches, farm investments, our approach to farm mechanization (WEP, Gender Knowledge and Climate Change in Northern Nigeria; report 2010).

Women in many contexts in Nigeria are disproportionately affected by natural disasters and extreme weather events, such as floods, droughts, and mudslides. Women are also under-represented in decision making at the household, community and societal level, including policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The issue of climate refugees has been discussed at various levels but empirical data on its nature, social and gender impacts, is perhaps inadequate. One of the areas, currently under discussion within the Nigerian context is the need to generate a country specific gender data base on the environment and sustainable development. This is critical as it will enable an improved understanding how societal expectations, roles, status, and the economic power of women and men affect, and are affected differently by climate change. It will also help inform actions taken to reduce vulnerability and combat climate change in the Country.

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

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

Area of Concern 12: The Girl Child

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

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

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

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

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

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

A person-

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

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

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

SECTION THREE: DATA AND STATISTICS

The FMOWASD works closely with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) to ensure that statistics on GEWE are collated and interpreted on a regular basis. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) as the coordinator of the National Statistical System in Nigeria has the mandate of advocating the use of statistics in government plans and programmes. Some of the GEWE data, which have been generated by the NBS are contained in ‘the Nigeria Poverty Profile Report of 2010, The 2010 Harmonized Nigeria Living Standard Survey, HNLSS); and the Core Welfare Indicator Survey, CWIQ 2006.

The National Gender Data Bank (NGDB) project commenced in 2006 by the National Centre for Women Development (NCWD), with the support of UNICEF and the OSSAP MDGs. The latter also provided support for the second phase of the NGDB in 2009. The National Centre for Women Development (NCWD) is the only parastatal of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. It is an institution created for gender training and capacity building, research, and documentation. This makes it a cross-sectional and trans-disciplinary instrument for sustainable human development.

The NGDB was established to generate, store and access gender specific data as a means of pooling and harmonizing data sources from all sectors of the Nigerian economy at all levels into a one stop referral point. The data bank in its section 5 contains a National Gender sensitivity tracking programme (GEN - TRACK), which comprises. The NCWD is primarily responsible for collecting periodic data for the GEN TRACK data base.

The collection and compilation on the minimum set of gender indicators, agreed by the UN statistical Commission is yet to commence due to funding constraints. The collation of data on the nine indicators on violence against women has also been stalled for the same reason. As part of efforts to improve data collection and compilation at national level, the NCWD is working assiduously to enrich the process of establishing the National Gender Data Bank, and also ensure sustainability of the project. A 29 member Multi-Technical Team (MTT) was constituted with membership from the National Bureau of statistics,MDAs, the academia, civil society groups and gender experts was established to provide ongoing technical support to the NCWD in upgrading the information contained within the data base.

There have been a number of data gathering initiatives led by civil society in Nigeria, which has also informed policy and practice changes.

EMERGING PRIORITIES

4.1. Key priorities for action (3 – 5 years)

The key priorities for action on gender equality and women empowerment over the next 3 – 5 years are:

4.1.1. Securing increased funding for GEWE interventions

The FMOWASD intends to engage in sustained advocacy for increased budget allocations and new funding windows for GEWE programmes and interventions. Within this context, efforts to engage the organized private sector will be accelerated.

4.1.2. Upgrade/improve national sex disaggregated database/ongoing gender research

Efforts will be made to upgrade and improve the country's sex disaggregated database. This effort will be driven by the NCWD working with civil society groups, the NBS and representatives from a range of MDAs. As a compliment to this, collaboration between academic institutions, CSO's and the FMOWASD for purposes of carrying out gender specific research around emerging contexts will be strengthened. These will be used as a basis for influencing policy reforms, planning and changes in practices at national, state and local government levels.

4.1.3. Targeted interventions for women and girls in areas prone to armed conflict and insurgency:

This will cover research, advocacy and survival training for vulnerable women and girls, among other interventions

It is vital to understand the underlying social dynamics and causes of violence in order to be able to continue to propose interventions that are contextually relevant. This will require continuous analyses of existing data on gender violence as well as the role that gender plays in the political economy and dynamics of violence. A national campaign will be mounted to tackle gender violence and raise awareness of its detrimental impact on society. The campaign will focus on a range of target groups including traditional institutions, civil society and the media.

Intergovernmental agreements and ongoing multi stakeholder collaboration will be put in place in order to promote greater legal protection and remediation for victims and survivors of gender violence.

4.1.4. Legislative advocacy towards the passage of gender equality Bills into law

One of the key priorities over the next 3 – 5 years is the strengthening of the law and policy regime for GEWE in Nigeria. Advocacy and awareness raising will be intensified among parliamentarians, religious and traditional leaders as well as other critical stakeholder clusters in order to reinforce the demand for the passage of outstanding gender equality bills into law at national and state levels.

4.1.5. Increase numbers of women in political/public life and also provide support for improved quality of women’s leadership in public life

A range of multi stakeholder actions have been instituted in the past few years towards increasing women’s participation in political and public life. Efforts will be made to generate resources (both human and financial) in support of such actions in order to maximize their impact in the coming years. These will include advocacy at political party level for their internal democracy measures to adopt affirmative actions that will ensure increased representation of women in appointive and elective positions; ongoing technical and financial support to female aspirants; training and other forms of support to women in public office.

4.1.5. Mentoring

In order to avoid reversals in GEWE outcomes and also build a critical successor generation, there will be ongoing investments and collaboration towards leadership training and mentoring for girls and young women

4.1.6. Rural women

Part of the GEWE focus over the next few years will be to ensure a translation of more generic gender equality outcomes into tangible improvements in the lives of women in rural communities. Rural impact assessments of ongoing economic empowerment initiatives will be carried out and deliberate efforts, (through programming and advocacy) will be made to improve participation and access by women in rural areas.

4.1.7. Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

The inclusion and participation of PWDs in national processes will also be one of the country priority actions on GEWE in the short, medium and long term. The

focus of activities within this context will be to improve access and opportunities for PWDs.

4.1.8. Partnering with men and boys

Women cannot achieve gender equality and women empowerment without the cooperation and participation of men. With this in mind, ongoing advocacy, training and dialogue will be used to present male leaders, with relevant data and information which could transform them into valuable allies in the push for GEWE. As a compliment to this, there will be targeted gender awareness raising efforts for boys and young men (primary and post primary school levels).

4.1.9. Improving women's access to economic and productive resources

This will include: financial literacy training for women; high level advocacy at the level of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and also at the Ministry of Trade and Commerce in order to negotiate increased women's access to emerging economic opportunities; advocacy for the review of all current eligibility criteria for accessing business support in order to align them with the contextual realities on the ground as far as women's access is concerned.

The FMOWASD will also in collaboration with women focused civil society groups, monitor the implementation of the national Financial Inclusion strategy as part of an overarching approach to improving women's economic status in Nigeria.

Through varying forms of bilateral collaboration and national stakeholder engagement, there will be deliberate effort to make financial services more available to women entrepreneurs.

Other possible actions within this intervention area will include: advocacy for tax system reforms in order to ensure that female headed households and breadwinners are not penalized unfairly, and that the taxation policy reflects the Federal Government's commitment to gender equity; advocacy for expanding women's access and entitlement to land as well as the implementation of the Nigerian Land Administration Act

4.1.10. Closing gender gaps in education and access to health

Over the next few years there will be ongoing multi sector collaboration towards the reduction of maternal mortality through and improved access to adequate emergency obstetric care and other support.

It has been suggested severally, that there is an undeniable link between women's education and their respective abilities to make appropriate choices that affect livelihood and wellbeing. The improvement of girl child enrolment and retention rates from primary through secondary and tertiary education will be of paramount interest within the next 3 – 5 years. Ongoing interventions and successes will be built upon and multi stakeholder interventions will be conceptualized to address emerging issues and address regional disparities in girl child education.

4.1.11 Continue to improve institutional arrangements for delivering on gender equality and the empowerment of women

Within this priority area, attention will focus on ensuring that gender units are actually established within each Ministry, Department and Agency; providing ongoing technical support to the gender units; and facilitating the emergence of similar structures in all the state and local government areas.

4.2. Country priorities and recommendations to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women on sustainable development goals and post 2015 agenda

Nigeria was part of the African Regional Preparatory consultations in Addis Ababa, from the 6th – 8th February 2014 and aligns with the recommendations of the outcome document from the said consultations.

The UN MDGs framework, though well-articulated contains a number of gaps, which relate to women and girls. These include a restriction of gender indicators and targets to: ensuring girl child education, more women in wage employment and increased women's representation in National Parliaments. The challenges and contributions of women and girls are conspicuously missing from all the other components of the UN MDGs framework. As a result of these gaps, the Country gender situation analysis continues to show huge disparities in spending and programming within the sectors that do not contain gender targets in the MDGs framework. For instance while the Country MDG report shows a marked improvement in girl education, and maternal health interventions, women in Nigeria still comprise an estimated 70% of the poorest of the poor and are still heavily impacted by emerging environmental challenges such as climate change.

Nigeria supports the adoption of a twin track approach to integrating gender in the post 2015 MDGs development agenda. This approach proposes the adoption of a transformative stand-alone goal on women and girls on the one hand, and the integration of gender equality targets and indicators in each component of the post 2015 Sustainable Development Framework, on the other.

It is also critical that the post 2015 agenda addresses the gender gaps identified in the current UN MDGS framework with respect to the environment; peace building and conflict management; women and girls' reproductive health, as well as targeted interventions for rural women and women with disabilities.

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