

PROMOTING INFORMED DIALOGUE ON SECURITY (PRIDES II)

REPORT ON THE MEETING ON PRIORITIZING THE VOICES OF WOMEN IN SECURITY ORGANISATIONS USING THE SECOND GENERATION NATIONAL ACTION PLAN (2017-2020)

DATE: 23RD FEBRUARY 2018; VENUE: NEW CHELSEA HOTEL, ABUJA; TIME: 9:00AM

BACKGROUND

Rule of Law and Empowerment Initiative also known as Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN) organized a one-day programme on *Prioritizing the Voices of Women in Security Organisations using the Second Generation National Action Plan (2017- 2020)*. The dialogue was organized in furtherance of the *Promoting Informed Dialogue on Security (PRIDES)* project supported by the Security Justice Reform Program (SJRP) as part of PWAN's Citizens' Security Program area.

The objective of the dialogue is to promote the inclusion of women in peace and security through the Second Generation National Action Plan (2017- 2020). The convening had in attendance participants from the formal and informal security sector, government agencies, and civil society organisations.

INTRODUCTORY SESSION

The convening commenced with welcome remarks from 'Kemi Okenyodo, Executive Director PWAN. She explained that the exclusion of women from security sector decision making spurred this attempt to change the narrative. Her remarks were followed by Katrina Aitken-Laird, Nigeria Security and Justice Adviser, West Africa Conflict & Security Team (CSSF). She stated that there has been a critical voice missing from discussions on security and justice which is that of women. The barometer & test of security forces must be the experiences of those they are mandated to protect & serve.

Following closely were remarks by Mr. Illyasu Omar Zubair from the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD). He stated that the inclusion of women in decision making is a daunting challenge and called for the implementation and domestication of UN Resolution 1325. Maj. Ian Robinson who is the Gender Adviser for the British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT) made welcome statements also and expressing his readiness to work with all.

SESSION 1

Security Sector Intervention in the National Action Plan- Dr. Eleanor Nwadinobi

The first session was facilitated Dr. Eleanor Nwadinobi, Gender Adviser for the Security Justice Reform Program and Conflict, Stabilisation and Security Fund (CSSF). Her presentation was focused on Security Sector Intervention within the National Action Plan. She provided an overview of the Action Plan. She stated that the United Nations Resolution 1325 was passed in October 2000, as a result of the realization that women and children suffer the most during violent conflict. For the first time in history, all countries signed the resolution and made commitments to form National Action Plans. Till date 57 countries have developed Actions Plans, 19 of them in Africa including Nigeria. In her recommendations, she stated that there must be redeployment of women back to the IDP camps, increased and proper participation of women in decision making processes as well as effective implementation of the Violence against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP) and speedy passage of the Gender Equal Opportunies (GEO) bill.

SESSION 2

Women as Survivors- Professor Patricia Donli, ED Gender, Equality, Peace and Development Centre (GEPaDC) and a lecturer in the University of Maiduguri

The second session was facilitated by Prof. Patricia Donli and was focused on expanding knowledge on the subject matter of women as survivors as well as how conflicts affect women. She explained the transformation of conflict over time, stating that in modern conflicts, there is a greater danger being a woman than being a soldier. Some of the effects of conflict on women include sexual assault and slavery, drug abuse, food insecurity, malnutrition, militarization of schools which greatly erode the gains of girl child education, forced marriage and lack of access to basic societal health facilities. She stressed the need for women to be empowered politically and also be afforded more responsibilities

SESSION 3

Good practices of women's participation in Peace and Security Architecture in West Africa, Lessons for Nigeria- Brigadier General ASH Saad (Rtd)

The third session was facilitated by Brigadier General ASH Saad (Rtd) ably represented by Dr. Maurice Ogbonnaya. In his presentation he highlighted some of the good practices of countries in West-Africa with regards to prioritizing the voices of women in security and also gave a few words of caution. He stated that there has been an increased representation of women in the

armed and security services of West African countries, however there is a need to be cautious when assigning roles to women, in pursuit of the Second National Action Plan. This is because statistics show that women in combat are more prone to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and suicide.

SESSION 4

Level of Implementation of the NAP (2017-2020) in Security Agencies

S/N	SECURITY AGENCY	LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION
1	NIGERIA ARMY	<p>The rumor that women have been banned from recruitment as combatants is false.</p> <p>The Nigeria Army currently has the first female Brigadier General in charge of Physical and Training corps</p> <p>The Chief of Army staff position can only be given to an officer recruited as a regular combatant, and not a professional. This provides opportunity for the first set of female regular combatants, who graduated from the National Defence Academy 3 years ago.</p> <p>The Nigeria Army has also tried to increase participation of women in peace building by deploying more women in specialist positions (psychologists, de-radicalization experts) into IDP camps.</p>
2	NIGERIA SECURITY AND CIVIL DEFENCE CORPS (NSCDC)	The NSCDC currently has 17 female commandants in charge of different states. The heads of the Planning, Research and Statistics unit (PRS), Abeokuta College of Civil Defence, and SERVICOM units are also women.
3	NIGERIA IMMIGRATION SERVICE	The service has so far had 2 female Comptroller Generals since its inception. There is no form of bias with regards to recruitment, all who are qualified and pass all necessary tests, whether male or female, can be recruited.

		The Nigeria Immigration Service has a functioning gender unit.
4	VIGILANTE GROUP OF NIGERIA (VGN)	The vigilante group of Nigeria was well represented by Mrs. Bola Aliyu, Commandant- Ekiti state command. In her comments she made clear that once the government assent to the bill guiding their sect, all things will take shape as they are also gender friendly.
5	CIVILIAN JOINT TASK FORCE (CJTF)	The CJTF was represented by Fatima Isa, a female member of the CJTF. She stressed the fact that despite the participation of female members of the task force, their welfare is neglected. She however stated that they will continue to work hard as their major concern is to ensure that their children are safe and peace is restored.

INTERACTIVE SESSION- KEY MESSAGES AND OUTCOMES

Participants who contributed to the ensuing discussions made the following comments:

- The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) in collaboration with the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) is currently prosecuting cases of sexual violence against women in IDP camps pro- bono in Borno state. FIDA has been able to spread its members across Six (6) IDP camps. It is also worthy to note that two (2) courts have been established within IDP camps to address all cases that occur within the camps.
- Kogi State has no women in political office likewise the security apparatus this extends to the State House of Assembly as well as Local Government. The same can be seen in other states.
- Kano state launched a State Action Plan as well as an implementation committee in May 2017, in furtherance of implementation of the National Action Plan (2017-2020).

- The lack of support for the *Bring Back Our Girls campaign* on the abduction of the Chibok girls in Borno did not receive enough support. This is what resulted in the repeat abduction of the Dapchi girls in Yobe State.
- There is a need for consistency across all security agencies with regards to operationalizing and implementing the provisions of the action plan on security agencies.
- There is a need to do away with the narrative that states that women do not like each other. It is not a female issue, but a natural human
- There is a need for full implementation of the gender policies adopted in the different states
- Women were earlier drafted to the IDP camps as security operatives. However, following the activities of the Boko Haram Sect in Baga, they were withdrawn but have since been deployed back to IDP camps

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The National Gender Policy is often used to advocate for political appointment and elective positions. There is a need to mainstream this into recruitment in security agencies.
- Attempts have been made to include gender courses into school curriculums but all to no avail. Agitations, awareness as well as effective advocacy must be made for gender courses to be included into school curriculums for aid resocialization.
- Social media should be employed and used effectively as a tool for championing gender equality
- There is a conspiracy of silence with regards to rape and sexual assault. All victims are encouraged to speak up about such incidences, to prevent another person falling victim.
- In IDP camps, there is little or no representation of women holding managerial positions in camp communities mostly because the men don't allow this. Hence, there is need for husbands and men to be carried along in the process of building peace.
- In Nigeria, more opportunities for women participation should be afforded especially in the areas of conflict, peace and security by dedicating at least 35% of job opportunities in both the formal and informal sector.
- Most Nigerians are unaware of the National Action Plan 2 as such there is need for sensitization and collaboration with public, private sector to drive this process from the federal to the local government level.
- Religious and Traditional leaders should assist security agencies with addressing cases of sexual and gender based violence, by educating community members on the appropriate channels to report such cases.

WAY FORWARD AND CONCLUSION

Concluding remarks were delivered by ‘Kemi Okenyodo. She stressed the need for participation of women in governance to go beyond numbers, and address quality of representation. PWAN intends to document and publish real life experiences of 10 women with regards to the subject matter, in furtherance of strategic management and communication.

