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IN BRIEF

COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

NIGERIA

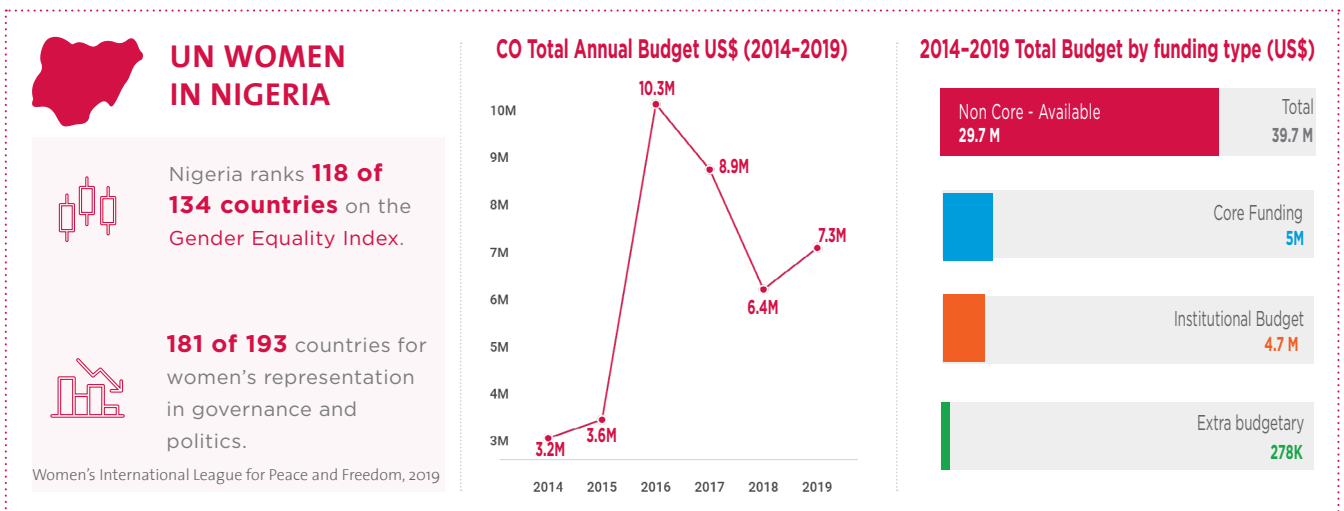
This brief presents the key findings and recommendations of the first fully fledged Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) of the UN Women Nigeria Country Office. The scope principally covers two Strategic Note cycles spanning the period 2014–2019.

With an estimated population of 200 million and a growth rate of 3.2 per cent, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa.¹ Nigeria has a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$ 448.10 billion making it the largest economy in the continent.² Nigeria also exerts significant influence on the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) – a regional political and economic union of fifteen countries located in West Africa with an estimated combined population of over 349 million.

The country currently, ranks 181 of 193 countries on the Gender Equality Index³ for reasons such as poor resource allocation in the economic and social sectors, frequent conflicts, forced displacements and inadequate inclusion of women and girls’ perspectives in policy-making decisions. Other reasons include low representation of women in governance and politics; and inadequate legal framework and limited capacity to support women’s

empowerment and equality efforts; reflecting the strategic importance of Nigeria to UN Women in advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE).

The UN Women Nigeria Country Office (CO) was established as a fully fledged office in 2012. Focusing on normative, coordination and programmatic interventions, the CO works with a range of partners to transform the gender equality landscape of Nigeria. At the operational level, the CO has particularly focused on four priority intervention areas: (1) women’s leadership and political participation; (2) women’s economic empowerment and resilience; and (3) women’s participation and decision-making in peace-building recovery efforts and humanitarian action; and (4) prevention of violence against women and girls. With estimated budgets of US\$ 25 million and US\$ 21 million, the CO’s 2015–2017 and 2018–2022 Strategic Notes (SNs) outlined the strategic direction and expected results from UN Women’s normative, coordination and operational work in Nigeria. In 2017, US\$ 17,477,425 was mobilized with 21 per cent (US\$ 5,349,183) allocated to core resources and Institutional Budget. As at the time of reporting in 2020, UN Women had mobilized 51 per cent (US\$ 10,737,115) of the total estimated budget for the SN 2018–2022.



EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND INTENDED AUDIENCE

This UN Women Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) assessed the evolution, growth trajectory and effectiveness of two SN cycles, looking at critical aspects of women’s empowerment and gender equality in Nigeria. The CPE had two overarching purposes, first, to help UN Women consolidate learning from what works well and what could be done differently; second, to offer evidence-informed insights to support the mid-term review of the 2018–2020 SN.

The CPE examined the implementation of UN Women’s integrated mandate (over a seven-year period) vis-à-vis its comparative advantage and the synergies among thematic areas, particularly in the humanitarian nexus. This in turn was guided by the analysis of key informant interviews and triangulated through desk reviews, an online survey and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

The primary audience for this evaluation includes CO management and personnel; relevant staff in target ministries; relevant Civil Society Organizations (CSOs); donors; target beneficiary communities and groups; UN agencies involved as partners in joint programmes; and UN Women regional offices in Western and Central Africa.

Evaluation methods

The CPE was guided by the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, human rights and gender equality. The evaluation used a theory-based cluster design and a contribution analysis. Multiple streams of evidence and data were collected through an extensive desk review of documentary evidence; key informant interviews; FGDs; and a survey of CO staff and partners. The evaluation team interviewed stakeholders and beneficiaries in the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), Lagos and Maiduguri in the north east part of Nigeria. The CPE used a gender-responsive approach during data collection and analysis of findings.

The data collected were organized under each evaluation question and judgment criteria to establish a trajectory of results and analysis of medium to long-term changes. These analyses were then drawn together to offer the eight key conclusions presented in this brief.

DATA COLLECTED FOR THE CPE

132 Stakeholders interviewed

CO staff, rights holders, Government, private sector, CSOs, donors, and UN agencies

+80 documents reviewed

Annual Work Plans, Evaluations and Audits, Project Documents Reports, Financial Documents

METHODOLOGY

Multiple streams of evidence and data through desk review, interviews, FGDs, and survey

Gender-responsive approach during data collection and analysis

Validation Workshop

held to validate facts and discuss findings with the CO as well as Evaluation Reference Group members

Past & current SN

the entire portfolio of the 2014–2017 SN and the first two years of the 2018–2022 SN

2 Surveys

UN Women CO Staff survey	48% response rate
Collaborating partners' survey	52% response rate

Case Study

- deep-dive case study on WPP and Leadership
- prioritized interventions in the north-eastern part of Nigeria

EVALUATION CRITERIA

KEY CONCLUSIONS



The CO was demonstrably adept at evolving its strategic position vis-à-vis gender equality and women's empowerment and changing priorities in the country context.

CONCLUSION 1: UN Women's strategic positioning within Nigeria and the choice of interventions were broadly relevant to GEWE needs; emerging security and humanitarian issues; and the operating context of its thematic areas (both at the national and subnational level). Although the balance of thematic priorities was mainly driven by funding availability, the CO was broadly doing the right things across its portfolio.



The CO's normative work is its strongest comparative advantage.

CONCLUSION 2: The CO recorded significant achievement in its normative mandates, ensuring that Nigeria fulfils its international commitments; supporting the adoption of international instruments; and the enhancement of gender-responsive systems, laws and policies. However, the process of embedding changes in policy at the state and local government level was a daunting task. This proved challenging, particularly as it levied high demand for UN Women resources and staff time.



The CO was viewed as strong and vocal in amplifying the voices of women in various strategic discourses.

CONCLUSION 3: The CO enjoyed a good degree of legitimacy in the gender space. There was near unanimous recognition that the CO's advocacy efforts and closely developed partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders amplified the voices of women in various strategic discourses. These efforts enhanced the strategic positioning of the CO's leadership, which was viewed as strong and vocal in bringing GEWE issues to the forefront. However, given the size of Nigeria's population and the challenges in gender equality, the same cannot necessarily be said for the CO's technical competency and resource capacity. This assessment was occasioned, in part, by a perception of UN Women as poorly resourced and therefore in some areas lacking the in-house technical capacity to generate the highest quality analyses and advisory on emerging GEWE issues (particularly within a wide range of economic, social and environmental dimensions).



Policy level work alone will not stimulate the kind of change required in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION 4: The complexity of Nigeria's three-tiered federalism (the national, state and local governments), and institutional context, positioned multi-level interventions as the most strategic and effective model to stimulate transformative change across the different levels of governance. To a certain extent, the CO's

approach of combining policy-level work with state-level interventions proved effective in consolidating policy gains; building the capacity of gender machinery; and facilitating the adoption and popularization of legislative frameworks in target states. For instance, this approach yielded promising results in Women, Peace and Security (WPS).



The WPS programme had some impactful results at the policy and institutional level and in influencing social norm changes.

CONCLUSION 5: Significant funding combined with a multi-year, multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach enabled UN Women to achieve considerable impact in the WPS programmatic area and allowed replication beyond targeted states. However, a more effective and sustainable outcome would have been achieved with better planning; earlier identification of suitable Programme Partners (PPs); and a risk-based plan organized before the start of project implementation.



Despite the capacity surge, the CO had a highly constrained staffing structure.

CONCLUSION 6: Despite a recent capacity surge and a very committed and dedicated workforce, the CO's current 'staffing structure' remains antithetical to building a stable and technically sound team. In this context, the CO faced difficulties in delivering on its ambitious SN and in playing a strategic role as a liaison with ECOWAS.



Although some internal and external factors were unavoidable, pragmatic and coherent planning could have yielded greater efficiency.

CONCLUSION 7: Although some internal and external factors were unavoidable, pragmatic and coherent planning could have yielded greater efficiency. A more result-oriented approach and strong M&E would have allowed the CO to better showcase its achievements in the gender space.



The fragmented nature of some projects both in terms of funding and duration offset long-term benefits and sustainability.

CONCLUSION 8: At the policy level, the CO helped create an environment that enabled the adoption of gender-friendly legislative frameworks, policies and strategies, some of which could be attributed to the long-standing support of UN Women. However, the sustainability of interventions hinges on several factors, some of which were outside of UN Women's control. UN Women's stretched presence on the ground and operational weaknesses of local partners generated high transaction costs, which had a bearing on the sustainability of UN Women-supported interventions and the CO's convening role within coordination mechanisms.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The context in which this CPE was conducted changed dramatically with the Covid-19 pandemic after the data-collection and analysis of the findings phase. Accordingly, UN Women should aim to implement these recommendations when the country moves to post-crisis recovery. In the meantime, the CO should

strive to incorporate the recommendations into its work to the extent possible given the current context.

These key recommendations also serve to provide a high-level, strategic road map to guide the CO in its next strategic planning cycle.



RECOMMENDATION 1

Intensify engagement in the lead up to **key strategic events in 2020**, such as “A Year of Action” and ensure integration of gender perspectives **in the context of Covid-19 and its ensuing post-pandemic recovery implications**.



RECOMMENDATION 2

Develop a coherent business case and agenda to better formalize the **revitalized partnership with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs** for sustainable impact.



RECOMMENDATION 3

Ensure continuity of **UN Women’s leadership of the Gender Technical Group (GTG)** and other gender coordination mechanisms without interruption to sustain the momentum created.



RECOMMENDATION 4

In consultation with regional and headquarters Human Resources, organize an **HR-mapping exercise** and analysis of functions, and develop a plan to fill major capacity gaps and to build a more stable workforce.



RECOMMENDATION 5

Rethink the strategy towards achieving **inclusive political participation in the 2023 election**.



RECOMMENDATION 6

Enhance **proactive planning/sequencing** and business processes to ensure greater efficiency.



RECOMMENDATION 7

Enhance **monitoring and Results Based Management capabilities** to demonstrate impact.

ENDNOTES

- 1 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Population Prospect 2019
- 2 World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files, 2019
- 3 Human Development Report 2019 http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/NGA.pdf