



# **CENTRE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

*A Non-Profit Organization*

## **COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)**

### **PERIOD COVERED IN THIS COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT**

**FROM: 30 SEPTEMBER, 2021**

**TO: 30 SEPTEMBER, 2023**

## PART I: STATEMENT OF CONTINUED SUPPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE

OCTOBER 2, 2023

### PART I: STATEMENT OF CONTINUED SUPPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE

To Our Stakeholders,

I am pleased to confirm that Centre for Human Development reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labor, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its content.

In this Communication on Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for an organization like ours working at the national and state levels. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours



Simi Afonja  
Executive Director

## **PART II: DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS:**

### **1. KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION EVENT WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS IN OYO STATE**

After the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Centre for Human Development (CHD) continued to work with small and medium enterprises and state policy makers on programs that promote the 10 principles of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), especially Principle 1 – Support the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights, Principle 6 – Eliminated discrimination in respect of employment and occupation and Principle 8 – Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility. The one-day knowledge mobilization event reported here showcased the findings of a 6-year comparative and city-based project on Urbanization, Gender, and The Global South: A Transformative Knowledge Network to relevant policy shapers drawn from the Ministries, Departments, and Agencies of the state government, academia, civil society organizations, women groups, faith-based organizations, and the media. The research was implemented within and across five cities– Cochabamba, Delhi, Georgetown (Guyana), Ibadan, and Shanghai–chosen for their differing regional locations, sizes, and experiences of urbanization and migration.

CHD collaborated with York University to implement the project in Ibadan City based on her over 20 years of research and intervention on women’s socio-economic and political emancipation. The study examined the changing nature of the relationships between gendered inequality and poverty, focusing particularly on how this is reconstituting gender relations and rights to the city and also engaged urban policymakers in their application of SDGs 5 and 11. The project commenced in

2018 and elapsed in 2023 and the main targets were women aged 18 to 25 years and 40 years above and urban policy shapers.

After the introductory session and remarks from the Executive Director, the Theater Art Department of the University of Ibadan gave a poetry presentation which was a recitation of poems with the focus group of the research. The poem eulogized the female gender as an embodiment of beauty, precarious activities, and victims of assaults/domestic violence as evidenced by the study participants' narratives.



**Image 1: Poetry Rendition**

This was followed by the presentation of the findings of the project as highlighted below:

- ❖ The analysis of the situation of women and girls in Nigeria records some interventions by the national and state governments such as the promulgation of the National Gender Policy, signatory to the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other global and regional frameworks that support gender equality and women empowerment. The Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP) 2015,

a federal law on gender-based violence while at the sub-national levels are state laws on gender-based violence and discriminatory practices.

- ❖ Success recorded by Nigeria on gender equality such as increasing school attendance and literacy rate and the existing challenges including low representation of women in governance and decision-making in public and private spheres, economic empowerment, and gender-based violence and discriminatory practices.
- ❖ Unprecedented rise in the rate of urbanization in Nigerian cities, Ibadan inclusive, and the challenges it poses to low-income women. These include difficulty in accessing public space for low-income women's economic ventures, increased incidents of violence and harassment, and inadequate provision of infrastructures and basic services such as affordable housing, basic drinking water, healthcare, and transport systems among others.
- ❖ The main activities implemented under the project include in-depth and life-history interviews with the research participants, key informant interviews with the Policy Shapers, and secondary data collection on urbanization, urban planning and renewal, and changes in Ibadan over the past 10 years. Others include ethnography of urban place-making, tracking the daily lives of the research participants, bi-annual meetings of the research participants and CHD team, and a COVID-19 study to explore the effect of the pandemic on the lives of the research participants.
- ❖ The study showed that 80 percent of the women and girls had received secondary school education, the majority of the women were either married or separated while the others were widows or single. The majority (80 percent) of the young girls were single while the remaining were single mums and one was already married at the time she was interviewed.
- ❖ The two major themes that emerged from the project were financial inclusion and gender-based violence. As many as 85 percent of the women and girls earn a living from the

informal sector of the economy but the jobs do not guarantee a stable income, are seasonal, low remuneration with no access to any form of social protection. In addition to their low-income earning characteristic, these women still cater to their household needs and their children, especially the abandoned or single mothers or homes where the husband is out of a job.

❖ The major recommendations include:

- Establishment of a state-sponsored microcredit agency that issues easily serviceable credit, without stringent conditions attached, and focused solely on women
- Financial literacy for low-income women and girls on formal financial services
- Policy to improve conditions of credit access by microfinance banks particularly shaming defaulters by microcredit providers to retrieve loans
- Enhancement of synergy between the state, local councils, Civil Society Organizations, the police, and communities on the implementation of the Oyo State Violence Against Women Law, 2016.
- Decentralization of service infrastructure on Gender-Based Violence to local councils with capacity building for stakeholders at the local government and communities to be able to respond effectively to cases of violence and discriminatory practices against women.



**Image 2: Presentation of Research Findings.**

After the presentation of results, there was a drama presentation that highlighted the financial challenges women experience in the informal sector and issues of domestic violence. This was followed immediately by panel sessions for the participants who were mainly the policy shapers to discuss the findings of the project and suggestions on how the recommendations of the study will be included in policies and programs of the government.

**Plenary Session I:** The panelists for the first plenary session on financial inclusion were a Deputy Director in the Ministry of Women Affairs, The National Coordinator of the Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development in Nigeria, and the President of, the Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria.

The actionable plans for financial inclusion include:

- Awareness about how to assess government's supported loans. For instance, the formation of women's groups of not less than 50 persons to access low-interest loans and to benefit from empowerment training by the state and local government. Accessing loans in groups creates a sense of commitment towards repaying the loans, monitoring by the government, and a support network among the women.
- Increased awareness about government's sponsored micro-credit schemes and how to access funds

- Increased budgetary allocation of funds or more funding to support women's Micro, Medium, and Small Enterprises
- Effective implementation of policies by civil servants so that desired programs or interventions by the government get to the intended beneficiaries.
- Involvement of different stakeholders in policy formulation so that there will be diverse opinions and the voice of everyone will be heard.

**Plenary session II:** The panelists for the second session on gender-based violence were the State President of the National Association of Women Journalists, the Secretary of the Federation of Female Lawyers, the Former Gender Desk Office Ministry of Women Affairs, and the Officer in charge of Gender Unit, of the Police Command.

The actionable plans on gender-based violence highlighted were:

- Support of all relevant stakeholders and members of the society
- Financial support to the Ministry of Women Affairs and Gender Unit of the Police to procure project vehicles to ease challenges of mobility in discharging their duties
- Sensitization of men and boys, religious and traditional leaders about cultural practices that predispose women and girls to gender-based violence
- That survivors of gender-based violence should have a voice and report to appropriate authorities so that perpetrators can be punished by the state
- That parents and guardians should pay attention to their children.



**Image 3: Group Photograph**

## **2. INTERVIEWS WITH POLICY SHAPERS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OYO STATE KNOWLEDGEABLE ON ISSUES ABOUT SDGs 5 AND 11**

This activity explores how SDGs 5 and 11 are being implemented in the country and Oyo State with a special focus on Ibadan City. A total of twenty six (26) Key Informant Interviews were held with the policy shapers in their offices. This is in a bid to document issues affecting low-income women and girls and top priorities to be addressed in the city to make it inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. The interview also found out if the interventions being carried out were in line with the global development frameworks like SDG 5 for stakeholders whose areas of intervention focused on women and girls and SDG 11 for stakeholders involved in urbanization issues and the extent to which their implementation is integrated and benefiting women. The interviews with the policy shapers also assessed the impact of the pandemic on their organizations, the major issues affecting women in the city since the pandemic, types of interventions for low-income women and

the urban as well as the success and challenges in carrying out intervention respectively for SDG 5 and 11.

### **Main Findings of Engagement with the Policy Shapers**

- ❖ Women are breadwinners in some homes in addition to traditional roles as wife, mother, and caregiver yet they are being subjected to gender inequality in both public and private places
- ❖ Among teenage girls, there is a high level of teenage pregnancy and abandonment by the boys or men responsible
- ❖ Lack of knowledge about sexual reproductive health and rights
- ❖ Lack of access to any form of health insurance as a result they often spend from meager income anytime they or a member of the family falls ill
- ❖ Inadequate access to public space for businesses as they usually make use of temporary space built with metal containers, wooden structures, kiosks, sheds, or tents with canopies for their businesses. These structures are often destroyed by the government for road expansion or beautification of the city centers as witnessed in the Challenge and Orita axis during the project
- ❖ Lack of representation in governance and decision-making that can advocate for policies and programs that affect women and girls
- ❖ Women and girls are more vulnerable to urban poverty and this leads to sexual exploitation and sexual violence
- ❖ Lack of urban policy like transport policy and a lack of funding for critical infrastructures.

The interviews with the policy shapers revealed that even though some of them work within the SDG framework in terms of carrying out empowerment programs for women, rights protection, and sensitization, however, not all the policy shapers are aware of the SDGs 5 and 11 indicators and targets. For those working on SDG 11, their main activities are urban flood management, waste and sewage disposal, and provision of water systems, empowering women with skills in waste and water management to increase income earning potentials by engaging in the recycling of waste in their environment.

Furthermore, it showed that at the federal level, the office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on the SDGs provides strategic leadership and guidance in the overall implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and it has four mandates. Mandate number one is strategic planning combinations and guidance for the SDGs. The second one is that of representation, advocacy, and partnership building for the SDGs. The third one is resource mobilization and management for the SDGs and the final one is monitoring, evaluation, and reporting for the SDGs. The office coordinates and reports for the SDGs implementation in Nigeria including the conduct of baseline indicators for SDGs and all the necessary setting up the institutional frameworks at the national and sub-national levels to ensure the implementation of SDGs taken without any hitch.

The challenges reported by the policy shapers in their work include a lack of cooperation among women in achieving a common goal, cultural and religious beliefs, and the unwillingness of the political leaders to enforce or abide by the constitution and relevant policies and conventions on women's human rights, low representation of women in decision making and lack of funds to pursue women's programs and inadequate personnel. For instance, at the Ministry of Women's Affairs, temporary shelters or homes are needed for battered women pending the time they may recover from any trauma they might have gone through from their partners. For policy shapers working on urban issues, their main challenges are a lack of cooperation from the populace, poor

orientation from the public on environmental issues, and political influence from the government. There have been instances where politicians intervene in the work of environmental officers whenever environmental health officers want to crack down on some neighborhoods in order not to lose political support from those places.

The success reported ranges from the establishment of the Ministry of Women Affairs at the federal and state levels to address issues facing women and girls to enlightenment among women and girls about their human rights including sexual and reproductive rights as well as increased awareness in the rural areas on girl child education. There has also been increased enlightenment on sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, and change in gender roles as women now work and fend for their families like men.

Centre for Human Development will replicate this experience in Lagos State in the years 2024 and 2025.