



STATEMENT BY NIGERIA

**AT THE 54TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

DELIVERED BY

**HER EXCELLENCY, IYOM JOSEPHINE ANENIH, *mni*,
HONOURABLE MINISTER OF WOMEN AFFAIRS
AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT,**

GENEVA,

26TH MAY 2010



PROTOCOL,

It is an honour and privilege for me to address members of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child at its 54th Session. I bring you special greetings from the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan.

2. I congratulate the Committee for its ability to convene this session and in particular for considering Nigeria's combined 3rd and 4th Periodic Report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

3. As this Committee is aware, Nigeria ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 21st March, 1999. In fulfillment of our obligation under article 44 of the Convention, Nigeria has so far submitted and successfully defended her initial, 1st and 2nd



periodic Reports, while the combined 3rd and 4th Report which we are reviewing today was submitted in 2008.

4. The report being considered by the Committee today covers the period between 2004—2008. The Report builds on the Second Country Periodic Report considered by this Committee in 2005. It encapsulates the actions taken as well as measures put in place to give effect to the provisions of the Convention. It also highlights challenges that Nigeria has faced and is facing in the process of domestication and implementation of the Convention.

5. To demonstrate her commitment to providing the enabling legal and social environments for the promotion and protection of the rights of children, Nigeria mainstreamed the provisions of CRC into national legislation and practice in July, 2003 by the passage of the Child's Rights Act. As necessitated by Nigeria's federal structure, advocacy has continued to ensure full domestication of



the Charter, through adoption of the Child's Rights Act by all of the 36 States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

6. Since the submission of our 2nd Periodic Report in 2004, eight (8) more States have adopted the Child Rights Act. Out of the eight (8) States, four (4) have passed it into law while the remaining four (4) are awaiting governor's assent. Efforts are being stepped up to ensure the adoption of the law by the remaining twelve (12) States. Public hearing and debates on areas considered contentious have been held and are still ongoing at various levels to facilitate the adoption of the law by these other States

7. Even as we pursue adoption of the Act to ensure that all Nigerian children enjoy the rights guaranteed in the Convention, Nigeria is also addressing the challenges associated with effective implementation at all tiers of government. Great strides have



been made in the area of providing an enabling policy environment. In addition to the various sector policies and plans enumerated in our report, a National Child Policy which translates the Child's Rights Act into specific objectives and targets, has been produced. Guidelines which set the standards for establishment and management, as well as a basis for monitoring of orphanages and other child care institutions have also been developed; these documents are being disseminated nationwide. We also want to report that family courts that would ensure effective enforcement of the Act/Law have been established in eight states of the country and the Federal Capital Territory.

8. As part of the national response to address the plight of orphans and vulnerable children in Nigeria, a costed National Plan of Action on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) has been approved and disseminated widely to local as well as international partners to guide OVC intervention efforts.



9. Inadequacy of data on situations of children which had been a major hindrance to meeting obligations to implement the Convention is being addressed. Today, a National Situation Assessment and Analysis on Orphans and Vulnerable Children has been conducted. The country now has statistics on the magnitude and well being of OVCs which is facilitating a well coordinated response to the phenomenon. Other data generation efforts include; Baseline Studies on Child Health Indicators; National Baseline on Child Protection Issue;, Baseline on children with Disability; 2008 National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS). Instruments for these surveys are scrutinized and monitored to ensure that the data gaps in child development programmes are being bridged.

10. Birth registration has been boosted through a high-level National Launch on 14th July, 2009. This, along with measures, to



address challenges of access is expected to positively impact on the birth registration situation.

11. To give children the right of participation and inclusion in national discourse, Nigeria has a vibrant Children's Parliament at both National and State levels. As part of the activities running up to the commemoration of the 2010 Children's Day celebration, the State and National Parliaments sat and resolutions adopted at the sittings have been forwarded to the State and Federal Executive Councils for consideration.

12. Members of this Committee are aware of the administrative structure of Nigeria which operates a three-tier system of government at federal, state and local government levels. Obviously, coordination of child development programmes at state, local and community levels pose serious challenges. However, consultations have been initiated to address these



challenges. The entry point is to conduct a gap analysis of the structures at this level, while capacity building of key personnel will be embarked upon. Community participation will also be promoted as a veritable tool to promote the survival and development of children at these levels. Coordination and synergy among Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) have been strengthened as typified by the involvement of various stakeholders in the preparation of the country report.

13. Ladies and Gentlemen, we have received a list of issues raised on our current report which were responded to and forwarded in writing to the Committee. The questions raised focused on the domestication and implementation of the Child Rights Act, obstacles posed by religion and culture in the implementation of the Act, the compatibility of our development plans with child rights, budget allocation to social sectors among other things.



14. I am pleased to inform the Committee that comprehensive responses to the list of issues have been articulated and I believe most of you are conversant with them.

15. Distinguished Committee Members, what Nigeria has done and is doing to improve the situation of the Nigerian child. Suffice to say that we acknowledge the challenges posed by our ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. These challenges are not insurmountable. We have a new administration which is committed and willing to improve on the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as domesticated in the Child Rights Act of 2003.

16. I thank you all for your attention.