Joint Alternative Report on the Human Rights situations of Persons with albinism in Nigeria to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD Committee)

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List of Abbreviations

1. **CRPD Committee** – Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
2. **AAN** – Africa Albinism Network
3. **APAN** – Advocacy for Persons with Albinism Network
4. **CRPD** – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
5. **VAPP** – Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act
6. **DPDPA** – Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act
7. **PWAs** – Persons with Albinism
8. **UHC** – Universal Health Coverage
9. **KAP** – Knowledge, Attitude and Practices
10. **NCPWD** – National Commission for Persons with Disabilities
11. **UBE** – Universal Basic Education

Executive Summary

This joint alternative report, submitted to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), assesses Nigeria’s compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) concerning persons with albinism. Despite Nigeria's ratification of the CRPD and the adoption of national laws and policies aimed at protecting persons with disabilities, persons with albinism continue to face severe discrimination, violence, and systemic exclusion. Persons with albinism in Nigeria experience widespread discrimination in education, employment, and healthcare. The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act (2018) (“Disability Act”) provides some legal protection, but weak enforcement and the absence of explicit recognition of albinism hinder its effectiveness.

Women with albinism face heightened risks of gender-based violence, including sexual abuse, domestic violence, and ritual killings. Harmful myths, such as the belief that intercourse with a woman with albinism can cure diseases, exacerbate their vulnerability. Children with albinism are disproportionately affected by bullying, social exclusion, and lack of reasonable accommodations in schools. The absence of inclusive education policies and assistive learning materials significantly hampers their educational progress.

Deep-rooted superstitions and misconceptions about albinism perpetuate discrimination and violence. Government-led awareness campaigns remain limited, leaving civil society organizations to fill the gap. Ritual killings and violent attacks against persons with albinism persist due to ineffective law enforcement. The government has not taken sufficient measures to protect persons with albinism from these threats. Persons with albinism struggle to access essential healthcare, including dermatological care and affordable sunscreen. The National Policy on Albinism acknowledges these needs, but implementation remains poor. Despite laws mandating employment quotas for persons with disabilities, persons with albinism face significant barriers in securing and maintaining jobs due to stigma and lack of workplace accommodations.

To address these challenges, the following measures should be taken:

- Strengthen enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, explicitly including albinism in legal frameworks.
- Enhance protections for women and children with albinism, addressing gender-based violence and school accommodations.
- Launch nationwide awareness campaigns to combat stigma and misinformation.
- Improve law enforcement responses to ritual killings and violence against PWAs.
- Ensure equitable access to healthcare, including free or subsidized sunscreen and cancer treatment.
- Enforce inclusive education policies and provide assistive learning devices.
- Implement employment policies that promote workplace accommodations and economic inclusion.

This report underscores the urgent need for comprehensive legal reforms, policy implementation, and societal change to protect and promote the rights of persons with albinism in Nigeria. By addressing these issues, Nigeria can move towards fulfilling its obligations under the CRPD and ensuring equal rights for all.

Introduction

Albinism is a genetic condition characterized by a significant reduction or complete absence of melanin pigment in the skin, hair, and eyes. This lack of pigmentation leads to very light skin and hair, as well as vision impairments due to the underdevelopment of the retina and abnormal patterns of nerve connections between the eye and the brain. Persons with albinism are more susceptible to sunburn and skin cancers because their skin lacks adequate melanin to protect against ultraviolet radiation.

Estimating the exact number of persons with albinism in Nigeria is challenging due to varying prevalence rates reported across different regions and times. Historical studies have indicated prevalence rates ranging from 1 in 2,858 in Lagos to 1 in 15,000 across several southeastern states.[1] A 2019 estimate suggested that with Nigeria's population at 180 million, there were more than two million persons with albinism in the country. Given the current population estimate of approximately 229 million in 2024,[2] it is likely that the number of persons with albinism has also increased proportionally.[3]

According to the National Policy on Albinism the population of persons with albinism in Nigeria is estimated at about six million, out of which 40% are children.[4] A recent survey conducted by The Albino Foundation, funded by the European Union Support for Democracy and Governance in Nigeria Project, highlighted a higher concentration of persons with albinism in Nigeria's Middle Belt region, including the Federal Capital Territory, extending further north. The survey also found that persons with albinism are less likely to be found in the southern part of the country.[5]

Persons with albinism (PWAs) in Nigeria face significant human rights challenges, including discrimination, stigma, exclusion, and violence. Societal misconceptions, inadequate policy implementation, and systemic barriers continue to undermine the enjoyment of their rights.

Nigeria’s official report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) only briefly mentions albinism under Article 29, stating that magnifying glasses were provided for persons with albinism, along with Braille ballot papers for the visually impaired. This single reference fails to address the widespread discrimination, violence, and lack of access to education, employment, and healthcare faced by persons with albinism in Nigeria.

Additionally, the report does not discuss the critical issues outlined in this alternative report, including the failure to protect persons with albinism from ritual killings, gender-based violence, and systemic exclusion from economic opportunities. This omission contradicts Nigeria's obligations under the CRPD to ensure comprehensive protections for all persons with disabilities, including persons with albinism.

Furthermore, Nigeria's report fails to acknowledge the National Policy on Albinism, which was designed to close the gap in protections for persons with albinism. The government's lack of recognition of its own policy and its failure to report on its implementation highlight a significant oversight. The policy should have been integrated into Nigeria's official report, outlining measures taken to enforce the rights of persons with albinism under the CRPD.

This alternative report evaluates Nigeria's compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), particularly in relation to Articles 5, 6,7, 8, 10, 15, 16, 24, 25, and 27. This report highlights the human rights challenges faced by persons with albinism in Nigeria It highlights key issues, relevant Nigerian laws, legal violations, and proposes recommendations to enhance the protection and inclusion of PWAs in Nigeria.

Thie report has been compiled by the Africa Albinism Network in consultation and collaboration with albinism groups in Nigeria including Albinism Association of Nigeria, Albinism Network Association – Nigeria.

Article 5 – Equality and Non-Discrimination

Persons with Albinism experience widespread discrimination in education, employment, healthcare, and social participation in Nigeria. Many persons with albinism report being turned down for jobs despite being qualified, solely based on their physical appearance. This perpetuates their economic instability and social exclusion further exacerbating their existing challenges.

Section 42 of the Nigerian Constitution (1999) prohibits discrimination based on circumstances of birth, but does not explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability.[6] The Disability Act mandates equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, but its enforcement remains weak.[7] The lack of enforcement means that many persons with albinism are left without redress when they experience discrimination. The Act also ensures access to equal opportunities but remains under-implemented. Similarly, the disability Act failed to include the denial of reasonable accommodation as one of the basis of discrimination. According to a report submitted to this Committee by organizations of persons with disabilities in Nigeria:

"the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act of 2018 does not address intersecting factors that exacerbate discrimination against persons with disabilities like age, gender, socio-economic background, conflict, displacement and sexual orientation, and 'disability', 'sexual orientation' and omnibus ground like 'other status' are not expressly included as prohibited grounds of discrimination in Section 42 of the Constitution, and reference with 'disability' in Section 42 is opaque as it does not specifically prohibit discrimination on ground on disability. Consequently, denial of reasonable accommodation is not a prohibited ground of discrimination both in the Constitution and the Act"[8]

While the Act does not explicitly mention persons with albinism, they are encompassed under its provisions as persons with disabilities. The Act's broad definition of disability ensures that persons with albinism are legally protected against discrimination. However, the absence of specific references to albinism leads to a lack of targeted interventions addressing the unique challenges faced by this group. Without explicit mention, there is a risk that the specific needs of persons with albinism, their health and educational needs are overlooked in policy implementation and resource allocation. The Act also provides broad protections against discrimination; however, it does not explicitly recognize the denial of reasonable accommodation as a form of discrimination based on disability. This gap is inconsistent with Article 2 and Article 5 of the CRPD, this could perpetuate existing barriers, such as inadequate access to vision aids, sun protection, and public education campaigns to combat stigma and discrimination.

The National Policy on Albinism in Nigeria represents a significant step towards addressing the challenges faced by persons with albinism, but several gaps hinder its effectiveness. A major issue is the weak implementation framework, as there are no clear enforcement mechanisms or accountability measures to ensure compliance at federal and state levels. Additionally, the policy lacks legal backing, making it non-binding and difficult to enforce, particularly in addressing discrimination and human rights violations.

While healthcare concerns are acknowledged, the policy does not provide a comprehensive strategy for ensuring free or subsidized sunscreen, regular skin cancer screenings, or access to low-vision aids, nor does it integrate albinism-related healthcare into Universal Health Coverage (UHC). In education and employment, although the policy promotes inclusion, it does not mandate reasonable accommodations such as assistive devices, large print materials, and teacher training, nor does it introduce affirmative action policies to combat employment discrimination.

Public awareness efforts remain insufficient due to the absence of a sustained nationwide campaign to challenge myths and stigma, as well as the lack of a dedicated budget for advocacy and education. Furthermore, the policy does not adequately protect persons with albinism from violence and harmful practices, such as ritual attacks and abductions, as there is no clear monitoring or reporting mechanism for such cases. Another critical shortcoming is the limited inclusion of persons with albinism in policy formulation and decision-making, as they are not adequately consulted in planning, implementation, or review processes. Nigeria’s failure to effectively implement these laws violates its obligations under Article 5 of the CRPD, which mandates non-discrimination.

Proposed Recommendations:

1. To align the national legal framework with the CRPD, we recommend that the Nigerian government amend Section 5 of the Disability Act to explicitly state that failure to provide reasonable accommodation constitutes discrimination, unless it can be demonstrated that such accommodation imposes an undue burden.

2. Strengthen anti-discrimination policies and awareness campaigns; The Nigerian government should take further steps to strengthen and effectively implement existing anti-discrimination policies including the discrimination against persons with disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018, National Policy on Albinism in Nigeria and awareness campaigns targeting persons with albinism to ensure their full inclusion and protection in society.

Article 6 – Women with Disabilities

Women with albinism in Nigeria experience multiple and intersecting forms of violence and discrimination, driven by their gender, disability status, and widespread misconceptions surrounding albinism. While the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) of 2015 and the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act (DPDPA) of 2018 provide legal protections, these laws fall short in comprehensively addressing the unique challenges faced by women with albinism. The Disability Act, for instance, includes provisions that generally protect persons with disabilities from discrimination (Section 1), exploitation, violence, and abuse (Section 24), and ensure access to social protection (Section 25), healthcare (Section 28), and legal remedies (Section 42).

However, the Act does not explicitly recognize the heightened risks of gender-based violence faced by women with disabilities, particularly those with albinism, who are often targeted for ritual attacks, sexual violence, and other forms of abuse. Furthermore, while it mandates protection from violence, it lacks specific provisions for gender-responsive services, such as accessible shelters, counseling, and legal support for survivors.

Research indicates that 30% of Nigerian women and girls experience physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse in their lifetime with about 55% of the survivors having challenges accessing support, and that 24.8% of females aged 18 – 24 had experienced sexual abuse before age 18.[9] The combined impact of gender-based violence (GBV) and systemic discrimination necessitates a stronger, more inclusive legal framework that explicitly considers their vulnerabilities.

One of the most pressing concerns for women with albinism is their heightened exposure to gender-based violence. The VAPP Act criminalizes various forms of violence, including physical, psychological, and sexual abuse.[10] It specifically prohibits harmful traditional practices, spousal battery, and widowhood rites, which are relevant to women with albinism, who are often subjected to domestic violence due to societal rejection or the belief that they bring misfortune.[11] In many cases, widows with albinism face economic deprivation and are stripped of their inheritance by in-laws.[12] The Disability Act (DPDPA) prohibits inhuman or degrading treatment, reinforcing protections against violence. However, it does not explicitly address GBV, leaving a gap in protection for women with albinism, who experience both gender-based and disability-related violence.

A particularly alarming form of violence against women with albinism is ritual killings. In some parts of Nigeria, harmful superstitions fuel the belief that their body parts hold mystical powers, leading to cases of abduction and murder.[13] While the VAPP Act criminalizes physical violence and harmful traditional practices, it does not explicitly mention ritual killings, despite their prevalence. The Disability Act prohibits inhuman treatment, which could be interpreted to include ritual killings, but it lacks specificity. Reports by albinism groups in Nigeria indicate that women and girls with albinism have been kidnapped and killed for ritual purposes.

Sexual violence and exploitation are additional threats that disproportionately affect women with albinism. A harmful myth in some communities across Africa including communities in Nigeria suggests that having sex with a woman with albinism can cure diseases such as HIV/AIDS.[14] For instance, 8 girls with albinism who were rescued by a local organization confirmed being raped by men to cure them from HIV/AIDS[15] This myth puts women and girls with albinism at increased risk of rape and sexual assault. The VAPP Act criminalizes rape and sexual violence and prohibits stalking, which is significant given that women with albinism often experience unwanted attention and harassment.

The Disability Act guarantees protection against exploitation and abuse, but neither law adequately recognizes the heightened risk of sexual violence faced by women with disabilities, particularly those with albinism. For instance, in 2024, local organization and albinism groups in Kaduna State rescued 22 girls with albinism who were subjected to rape and other sexual violence. The above report by a local organization based in Kaduna State indicated that these girls were recruited by the perpetrators under the pretense of giving them vocational training in dress making and bead making. However, the girls reported being raped by men who visited the training center each night.[16] Reports from the United Nations Independent Expert on Albinism also indicate that perpetrators of sexual violence against women and girls with albinism often go unpunished due to stigma and lack of access to justice.[17]

Beyond physical violence, women with albinism face systemic discrimination in education, employment, and healthcare, further compounding their vulnerability. The Disability Act mandates equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities, including access to education and employment, and prohibits workplace discrimination. However, enforcement remains weak. Many women with albinism struggle to secure jobs due to deep-seated stigma and cultural myths that portray them as harbingers of misfortune.

Additionally, access to healthcare services is often limited due to discrimination and financial barriers. The VAPP Act does not address systemic discrimination in these areas, making it less effective in tackling the socio-economic exclusion that exacerbates the vulnerability of women with albinism. Reports by albinism groups highlights that many women with albinism face challenges accessing skin cancer treatment, sunscreen, and vision-related healthcare due to institutional barriers and neglect.

Proposed Recommendations:

1. Amend the VAPP Act to explicitly recognize persons with disabilities as a vulnerable group requiring special protection from GBV.
2. Launch awareness campaigns to address myths and misconceptions about albinism.
3. Ensure access to justice by making reporting mechanisms, legal aid, and law enforcement more accessible to women with albinism.

Article 7: Children with Disabilities

Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) obliges States Parties to take all necessary measures to ensure that children with disabilities enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children. Nigeria, as a signatory to the CRPD, is mandated to protect children with disabilities from discrimination, provide them with opportunities for development, and safeguard their dignity and well-being.

However, children with albinism in Nigeria continue to face severe challenges that undermine the realization of their rights. They encounter systemic discrimination, social stigma, and threats to their safety and well-being, including social exclusion, limited access to education due to poor vision and lack of reasonable accommodations, high vulnerability to skin cancer due to inadequate access to sunscreen and dermatological care, threats to safety from ritual killings and superstitious beliefs, and limited economic and social support from families who struggle to meet their medical and educational needs. According to the Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) research documented by UNICEF, the population of PWAs in Nigeria is estimated at about six (6) million, out of which 40% are children.[18]

Nigeria has taken legislative and policy steps to address challenges faced by vulnerable children, including the Child Rights Act (2003), which seeks to protect all children but suffers from weak implementation; the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, which prohibits discrimination but lacks specific provisions for children with albinism; and the National Policy on Albinism, designed to address their unique needs but hindered by slow implementation. The Child Rights Act does not explicitly recognize children with albinism, leaving them vulnerable to ritual attacks, discrimination, and inadequate healthcare. It also fails to mandate specialized healthcare—such as access to sunscreen, dermatological care, and vision support—or inclusive education measures like assistive learning tools.

Despite these laws and policies, gaps in implementation persist, including weak enforcement, limited awareness and training among key stakeholders, inadequate resource allocation, and the absence of targeted legal protections for children with albinism.

Proposed Recommendations

1. **Improve Healthcare Services:** Establish a national program for free or subsidized sunscreen distribution and dermatological care for persons with albinism.
2. **Increase Public Awareness and Training:** Launch nationwide sensitization campaigns to combat stigma and discrimination against children with albinism. Train law enforcement officials, educators, and healthcare providers on the specific challenges faced by children with albinism and how to address them.
3. **Enhance Security Measures:** Strengthen law enforcement efforts to combat ritual killings and other forms of violence against children with albinism by ensuring stricter enforcement of criminal laws and increased community monitoring.

Article 8 – Awareness Raising

The widespread stigma and discrimination against persons with albinism in Nigeria are deeply rooted in harmful myths and misconceptions, perpetuating social exclusion, violence, and economic marginalization. Research reveals that persons with albinism are seen as sorcerers, devils, or persons suffering from a curse, and in some communities, it is believed that contact with them will bring bad luck, sickness, or death.[19] This false narrative contributes to the ostracization, abandonment, and abuse of persons with albinism, particularly women and children, who face heightened risks of gender-based violence, ritual killings, and social neglect.

The National Policy on Albinism in Nigeria emphasizes that misconceptions about albinism, rooted in socio-cultural myths and beliefs, lead to social exclusion, limited political engagement, and economic marginalization for individuals with albinism.[20] Due to deep-seated prejudices, persons with albinism often struggle to access education, employment, and healthcare, which significantly affects their quality of life. Many children with albinism drop out of school due to bullying, social isolation, and lack of reasonable accommodations such as assistive devices for low vision.[21] The National Policy on Albinism also highlights that persons with albinism are subjected to significant social stigmas, leading to ridicule, discrimination, and violence. These negative perceptions force many to operate in isolation and hinder their engagement in meaningful economic activities, resulting in economic marginalization.[22]

This systemic exclusion contradicts Article 8(2)(b) of the CRPD, which obligates states to foster an attitude of respect through education, media engagement, and public awareness initiatives. By failing to combat societal bias through sustained public campaigns, Nigeria is not only violating its international obligations but also reinforcing the marginalization of persons with albinism.

Although Nigeria’s National Orientation Agency Act mandates public education on human rights and social inclusion, there has been little to no government-led effort to incorporate albinism awareness into national policies. Most awareness initiatives have been spearheaded by civil society organizations, such as the Albino Foundation, the Albinism

Network Association of Nigeria, the Albinism Association of Nigeria and many other albinism groups across the country, with minimal government support. This lack of institutional commitment undermines the effectiveness of public awareness efforts and allows harmful stereotypes to persist.

The negative portrayal of persons with albinism in the media further exacerbates their marginalization. In Nigeria, some films and television programs reinforce damaging stereotypes, depicting persons with albinism as ghosts, evil spirits, or individuals cursed by supernatural forces.[23] This dehumanizing narrative fuels fear and discrimination, discouraging social interaction and inclusion. Article 8(2)(c) of the CRPD mandates that states encourage media outlets to portray persons with disabilities, including those with albinism, in a respectful and non-discriminatory manner. However, Nigeria has not taken sufficient steps to regulate harmful media portrayals or promote positive representations of persons with albinism in mainstream culture. This gap perpetuates social bias and undermines the fight against discrimination.

Proposed Recommendations:

1. Launch a nationwide public awareness campaign to educate communities about albinism, dispel myths, and highlight the contributions of persons with albinism to society. The state must utilize radio, television, and social media campaigns to maximize reach. And engage traditional and religious leaders to influence public perceptions.
2. Integrate albinism education into school curricula to ensure that children learn from an early age that albinism is a genetic condition, not a supernatural phenomenon.
3. Collaborate with media organizations and civil society groups to promote positive narratives about persons with albinism and counter harmful stereotypes. This can be achieved by encouraging the production of inclusive and accurate media portrayals of persons with albinism
4. Support advocacy groups including albinism groups and organizations working to combat discrimination and foster social acceptance.

Articles 10 and 15: Right to Life and Freedom from Torture or Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment

Persons with albinism in Nigeria continue to face grave human rights violations, including ritual killings, violent attacks, and harmful practices fueled by superstitions and deep-rooted myths. These beliefs often lead to persons with albinism being targeted for their body parts, which are falsely thought to bring wealth and power. The constant threat of such attacks creates an environment of fear, restricting their ability to move freely, seek education, or participate in social and economic activities. Despite constitutional and legal protections, the failure of law enforcement to adequately investigate and prosecute these crimes fosters a culture of impunity, further endangering their lives.

One such case occurred on June 24, 2023, when a 29-year-old graphic designer with albinism in Onitsha, Anambra State, was attacked in his home by a relative from his mother's hometown. The assailant, who had arrived unannounced and requested to stay overnight, attempted to kill the victim in the early hours of June 25. The victim was stabbed twice in the neck and strangled but managed to fight back and call for help. Neighbors intervened, and the attacker was apprehended. When confronted, he claimed he had been "dreaming."

Further investigations revealed that the attacker had allegedly attempted a similar assault on the victim's mother weeks earlier and had expressed intentions of conducting a ritual if he failed to obtain money. A witness later confirmed these intentions in a recorded statement. The suspect was detained at Akwuzu SARS station on August 5, 2023. However, despite the victim's pursuit of justice, there were attempts to withdraw the case without his knowledge during a November 7, 2023, hearing.[1]

This case underscores the severe human rights violations faced by persons with albinism in Nigeria, particularly the ongoing threat of ritual killings. It highlights the widespread belief in harmful superstitions that continue to endanger lives, especially among vulnerable groups. Despite the constitutional guarantee of the right to life under Section 33 of the Nigerian Constitution and Nigeria's obligations under Articles 10 and 15 of the

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[1] Records of Attacks on persons with albinism ny Under the Same Sun

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), weak law enforcement and a lack of political will allow these crimes to persist. The failure to promptly prosecute and convict perpetrators fosters a culture of impunity, reinforcing fear and restricting the rights of persons with albinism. The Nigerian government must take immediate and effective measures to protect persons with albinism from life-threatening attacks, ensure justice for victims, and break the cycle of ritual violence.

Nigeria’s legal framework explicitly guarantees the right to life and criminalizes ritual killings. Section 33 of the Nigerian Constitution (1999) affirms that every person has the right to life and must not be deprived of it except in cases determined by law. However, weak enforcement of these laws and limited political will have allowed violence against persons with albinism to persist with minimal consequences for perpetrators.

This failure directly contravenes Articles 10 and 15 of the CRPD, to which Nigeria is a signatory. Under Article 10, states are required to ensure the right to life for persons with disabilities by taking proactive steps to protect them from life-threatening harm. Similarly, Article 15 obligates states to protect persons with disabilities from torture, cruelty, and inhuman or degrading treatment—including ritual killings, mutilations, and social ostracization faced by persons with albinism.

Proposed Recommendations:

1. Strengthen law enforcement efforts to ensure that cases of ritual killings and attacks against PWAs are thoroughly investigated and prosecuted.
2. Establish special task forces within the police and judiciary to handle cases related to violence against PWAs, ensuring swift justice and deterrence.
3. Enhance community awareness programs to dispel harmful myths about albinism and discourage ritual practices.
4. Improve victim protection services, including safe shelters, psychological support, and legal aid for survivors and families of victims.

Article 16: Freedom from Exploitation, Violence and Abuse

Nigeria’s commitment to Article 16 of the CRPD, which mandates the protection of persons with disabilities from exploitation, violence, and abuse, remains inadequate in practice despite its legal obligations. Although Nigeria ratified the CRPD in 2007 and enacted the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018, weak enforcement has failed to safeguard the rights of persons with albinism.

The National Policy on Albinism in Nigeria highlights that persons with albinism face significant abuse, violence, and exploitation due to social stigma and discrimination. These challenges lead to isolation and economic marginalization. The policy advocates for the protection of persons with albinism, ensuring their inclusion in all sectors of society and aligning with international human rights frameworks to safeguard their dignity, personal liberty, and freedom from discrimination. It emphasizes the need for legal and social measures to prevent abuse and promote equal opportunities. However, implementation of the policy remains a major challenge due to budgetary allocation and other constraints.

Additionally, the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, which criminalizes abuse and exploitation, has been inconsistently enforced, particularly concerning crimes against persons with albinism. Numerous cases illustrate the severity of these challenges. Reports from Kaduna State reveal that 22 young girls with albinism have been trafficked and sexually exploited under false pretenses of vocational training, yet perpetrators often evade justice due to police inaction.[24]

Ritual killings driven by superstitions that claim the body parts of persons with albinism bring wealth continue unabated, with law enforcement failing to prosecute offenders effectively. Women with albinism are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence, often targeted due to myths that intercourse with them cures diseases.[25] Systemic barriers further hinder persons with albinism from accessing justice, as cases involving violence against them are frequently dismissed by the police.

Nigeria’s response to these violations is further undermined by legal gaps, inadequate support services, and prevailing cultural misconceptions. The absence of specific laws addressing ritual killings and the lack of specialized shelters, legal aid, and counseling for victims exacerbate their vulnerability. Public awareness campaigns remain insufficient to challenge deep-seated superstitions about albinism.

Proposed Recommendation:

1. **Strengthen law enforcement:** Train police officers and judiciary officials on handling cases involving persons with albinism and ensure the swift prosecution of offenders.
2. **Amend relevant legal frameworks:**
   - Modify the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018, to explicitly criminalize targeted violence against persons with albinism.
   - Introduce strict penalties for individuals propagating harmful superstitions leading to violence against persons with albinism.
3. **Establish specialized support services:** Create dedicated centers for reporting of violence, provide free legal aid, and offer psychosocial counseling for persons with albinism who are victims of violence.
4. **Launch public awareness campaigns:** Implement nationwide educational programs to dispel harmful myths and superstitions surrounding albinism.
5. **Enhance community engagement:** Work with religious and traditional leaders to advocate for the rights and protection of persons with albinism.
6. **Allocate adequate budgetary resources:** Ensure sufficient funding for the implementation of policies and programs designed to protect persons with albinism from violence and discrimination.

Article 24: Education

Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities obligates States Parties, including Nigeria, to ensure inclusive and quality education for persons with disabilities including persons with albinism. This requires eliminating barriers to education and providing reasonable accommodations to meet the diverse learning needs of students with disabilities. Despite its ratification of the CRPD, Nigeria has consistently failed to create an accessible, inclusive, and non-discriminatory educational system for all children, particularly those with albinism.

Children with albinism are subjected to bullying, discrimination, and social exclusion, which often results in emotional distress and withdrawal from school. As Fedizy from South-South Nigeria recounts: “In school, I was the only person with albinism. So, people mocked me; some laughed at me – some called me names. Some will say ‘oyinbo pepper.’ Some will just be laughing at me about my eyesight. It affected me badly. I will sit lonely and start crying.”[26] The government has failed to implement effective anti-bullying policies that protect children with albinism from such treatment.

In addition, there is a severe lack of awareness among educators regarding the specific learning needs of children with albinism. Many teachers misinterpret their visual impairments as laziness, leading to punitive responses rather than support. Nori from South-East Nigeria shared her experience: “I didn’t have support in terms of school. I didn’t write in class because I couldn’t see what was written on the board. But my teachers did not understand that it’s not me not wanting to participate. They thought that I was just too lazy to write. One day, my teacher saw that I was not copying notes. She asked me why, and when I couldn’t give her an answer, she caned me badly. This happened a lot of times.”[27] Nigeria’s failure to train teachers on disabilities, including albinism, further deepens these injustices.[28]

It is noteworthy to state that children with albinism lack access to essential assistive devices and learning materials, such as large print books, magnifiers, and appropriate classroom seating arrangements. The absence of these accommodations significantly impairs their ability to learn effectively and undermines their right to education.

While Nigeria has introduced laws and policies aimed at promoting inclusive education, the lack of implementation renders them largely ineffective. The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018 mandates inclusive education and prohibits discrimination in schools, but enforcement mechanisms are weak, and violations go largely unpunished. The Universal Basic Education Act guarantees free and compulsory education for all children, yet in practice, children with albinism remain underserved due to systemic neglect and inadequate resources. The National Policy on Albinism acknowledges the challenges faced by persons with albinism, including in education, but there is little evidence of its practical implementation or impact on improving educational access.

Proposed Recommendations:

1. Amendments to the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act:

- Amend Section 17(1) to explicitly require monitoring and reporting mechanisms for compliance with inclusive education policies, ensuring that schools implement reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, including those with albinism.
- Introduce a new subsection under Section 17 that mandates specific penalties for schools that fail to provide reasonable accommodation, including large print materials, magnifiers, and appropriate classroom seating.

2. **Amendments to the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act;**

- Amend Section 2(1) to include a provision requiring all schools to provide disability-friendly learning materials, including large print books, magnifiers, and alternative formats for students with visual impairments.
- Amend Section 3 to include a provision mandating that all classrooms be designed with adequate lighting and seating arrangements to accommodate children with albinism who struggle with light sensitivity and vision impairments.

4. **Implementation of a National Anti-Bullying Policy for Inclusive Education:**

- Amend the Child Rights Act, to include explicit anti-bullying provisions related to disability and albinism, ensuring legal consequences for violations.

- Require schools to establish peer support and mentorship programs to promote inclusion and social integration of children with albinism.

5. **Establishment of an Inclusive Education Fund:**
    - Amend the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Establishment, Etc.) Act 2011, specifically Section 3 (Functions of the Fund) and Section 7 (Disbursement and Management of Funds), to mandate the allocation of a percentage of the education tax to inclusive education programs. This should specifically fund assistive technology and specialized teacher training on albinism and other disabilities.
    - Create a dedicated fund within the Ministry of Education to provide resources to schools for the procurement of assistive devices and development of specialized learning materials for children with albinism.
6. **Establishment of a National Inclusive Education Task Force:**
    - Establish a task force under the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) to monitor and enforce inclusive education laws, particularly for children with albinism.
    - Require periodic reporting to the National Assembly and Ministry of Education on compliance levels and challenges in implementing inclusive education.

Article 25: Health

Article 25 of the CRPD mandates that States Parties ensure persons with disabilities have equal access to healthcare without discrimination. For persons with albinism, this includes access to essential health services such as dermatological care, sun protection, and cancer treatment. Nigeria is obligated to ensure that its healthcare system adequately addresses the specific needs of persons with albinism.

Despite these obligations, persons with albinism in Nigeria continue to face severe barriers to accessing healthcare. The most pressing health challenge for persons with albinism is skin cancer, which is largely preventable with adequate sun protection and early medical intervention. However, many persons with albinism lack access to affordable sunscreen, protective clothing, and dermatological care.

Furthermore, public healthcare facilities are often ill-equipped to provide specialized services for persons with albinism. Many healthcare professionals lack awareness of albinism-related conditions, leading to delayed diagnoses and inadequate treatment. Additionally, high costs associated with skin cancer treatment place a financial burden on individuals and their families, pushing many into extreme hardship or leading to avoidable deaths.

The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, includes provisions on healthcare access, but it does not specifically address the unique health challenges of persons with albinism. The National Policy on Albinism in Nigeria recognizes the health vulnerabilities of persons with albinism, including the need for sunscreen and cancer treatment. It advocates for the provision of free or subsidized sunscreen and the integration of skin cancer treatment into public healthcare services. However, implementation remains a challenge, with advocacy groups calling for stronger government action to ensure access to these essential health services.

Proposed Recommendations

1. **Establish specialized healthcare services** for persons with albinism, including dedicated dermatology clinics and cancer treatment centers.

2. **Raise awareness among healthcare professionals** on the medical needs of persons with albinism to prevent misdiagnosis and neglect.
3. **Incorporate sun protection measures** into public health programs, including community distribution of protective gear and education on skin cancer prevention.

Article 27: Work and Employment

The right to work is a fundamental human right enshrined in Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Nigeria ratified in 2007. This provision mandates that state parties promote equal employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and protect them from discrimination in the workplace. In line with this commitment, Nigeria enacted the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, which, among other things, mandates that at least 5% of public sector jobs be reserved for persons with disabilities including persons with albinism.

The National Policy on Albinism in Nigeria outlines specific measures to improve access to employment for persons with albinism. These measures include promoting social inclusion and economic empowerment, as well as guaranteeing equal access to education and healthcare. Additionally, the policy emphasizes the need for public awareness campaigns to combat socio-culturally constructed myths and discrimination associated with albinism, which adversely impact employment opportunities. Furthermore, the policy advocates for the implementation of National Action Plans with specific measures on employment of persons with albinism in high public office, ensuring that qualified individuals are considered for such positions.

However, despite these legal and policy commitments, the lived experiences of persons with albinism in Nigeria demonstrate a stark discrepancy between law and practice, as they continue to face systemic barriers to employment, workplace discrimination, and inadequate policy implementation.

One of the most pressing challenges for PWA in Nigeria is discriminatory hiring practices, which systematically exclude them from employment opportunities, even when they possess the necessary qualifications. A notable example is the case of a Nigerian lady with albinism who was denied employment in the Nigeria Police Force despite completing all required training.[29] His rejection was based solely on his albinism, highlighting the prevalence of visual and skin-based discrimination in the job market.

Similarly, numerous accounts reveal that employers hesitate to hire persons with albinism, often citing their visual impairment as a reason to disqualify them, even when the nature of the job does not require perfect vision. Such employment barriers not only violate Section 28(1) of the Disability Act, which guarantees persons with disabilities the right to work without discrimination but also contravene the provisions of National Policy on Albinism, which aim to improve economic inclusion for persons with albinism. The failure of enforcement mechanisms allows such discrimination to persist unchecked.

Even when PWA secure employment, they frequently endure hostile work environments that hinder career progression. Workplace bullying, verbal abuse, and social exclusion are common experiences for many individuals with albinism.[30] Additionally, their low vision often results in unfair performance evaluations, as employers fail to provide reasonable accommodations such as large-print documents, screen readers, or flexible work arrangements. Section 28 of Nigeria's Disability Act guarantees persons with disabilities the right to work on an equal basis with others, prohibits employment discrimination, and imposes fines on individuals and organizations that violate these provisions. The absence of enforcement mechanisms weakens Nigeria’s obligations under Article 27 of the CRPD, which explicitly requires state parties to ensure that workplace discrimination is actively prevented through both legal and practical measures.

Beyond individual workplace experiences, structural barriers further restrict economic opportunities for persons with albinism. Many individuals with albinism struggle to access higher education or vocational training, largely due to exclusionary educational policies that fail to accommodate their visual impairments.[31] The result is an employment gap where persons with albinism remain underrepresented in both skilled and unskilled labor sectors. Without targeted economic inclusion programs, vocational training, and affirmative action policies, Persons with albinism will continue to face economic marginalization. The National Policy on Albinism was meant to address these challenges by providing employment opportunities for persons with albinism, but none of the employment-related provisions in the policy had been implemented. This failure further demonstrates the government’s lack of commitment to translating policy into action, leaving persons with albinism to navigate a job market that remains largely inaccessible to them.

Compounding these issues is the absence of judicial and administrative remedies for workplace discrimination against persons with albinism. Although the Disability Act establishes the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities to oversee compliance with disability rights, no active monitoring mechanism exists to track violations or enforce employment quotas. Moreover, persons with albinism who experience discrimination often lack access to legal representation or administrative avenues for redress, leading many to abandon their claims rather than engage in lengthy and costly legal battles. This situation contradicts Nigeria's obligations under Article 27(1)(b) of the CRPD, which mandates that states ensure "effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programs, placement services, and training" for persons with disabilities. Without a well-resourced and empowered disability commission, Nigeria will continue to fall short of these obligations.

Propose Recommendations

1. **Amend the Disability Act to Strengthen Employment Protections**

- Mandate workplace accommodations for visually impaired employees, including larger font materials, screen readers, flexible working arrangement and adjusted performance evaluations.

2. **Enforce the National Policy on Albinism**

- Amend the National Policy on Albinism in Nigeria to include mandatory employment quotas for persons with albinism in public and private sectors.
- Establish a monitoring body to track compliance with the employment provisions in the policy.

3. **Create Economic Inclusion Programs**

- Implement vocational training and entrepreneurship programs tailored to persons with albinism.
- Provide start-up grants to encourage self-employment among persons with albinism.

4. **Awareness and Sensitization Campaigns**

- Launch workplace anti-discrimination programs targeting HR professionals and business owners.

- Integrate albinism awareness into corporate diversity policies.

5. **Judicial and Administrative Reforms**

- Establish fast-track tribunals to handle employment discrimination cases against persons with albinism.
- Empower the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities to actively enforce workplace rights.

Conclusion

Despite Nigeria’s ratification of the CRPD, persons with albinism continue to face significant human rights challenges. The ongoing discrimination, lack of legal enforcement, and widespread harmful beliefs highlight Nigeria’s failure to meet its obligations under the CRPD. This alternative report underscores the urgent need for comprehensive policy implementation, legal reforms, and societal change. By adopting the proposed recommendations, Nigeria can make significant progress toward ensuring the full inclusion and protection of persons with albinism.

The End