

UNODC, NAPTIP, EU, ECOWAS to collaborate on a framework to combat human trafficking in Nigeria



United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), the European Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have pledged to work together to combat human trafficking in Nigeria by ensuring that a framework that would boost stringent implementation of enabling anti-trafficking laws are put in place. The commitment was given in Abuja by the organisations and other stakeholders who gathered for the 1st policy-level meeting on human trafficking in Nigeria. The gathering is part of the project “From Policy to Action: Implementation of the National Action Plan on Human Trafficking in Nigeria (2022-2026),” funded by the Swiss government and jointly executed by NAPTIP and UNODC. Director-General of NAPTIP, Binta Adamu Bello described the current spate of human trafficking as a grave violation of human rights, which is threatening the very fabric of Nigerian society. She noted that combating the scourge requires a coordinated response that brings together all arms of government, law enforcement agencies, international partners, civil society organizations and the general public. Bello said: “We will ensure that our coordination remains robust and adaptive to the evolving nature of trafficking crimes,” adding that: “Collection, analysis and reporting of reliable, sufficient and up-to-date data is needed to better prevent and combat this crime and its complex and ever-evolving dynamics.” The NAPTIP DG said her office is now adopting a

bottom-up approach to identify and track traffickers at the grassroots for effective prevention and prosecution, revealing that NAPTIP is now engaging the 774 local government areas. She noted that the conference was organized to review reports on counter-human trafficking efforts from government agencies, identify priority actions for 2025, and engage in interactive sessions to gather valuable feedback. On his part, the Deputy Country Representative of UNODC Nigeria, Danilo Campiso who said a human trafficking-free Nigeria is possible, stressed the need

for collaboration for effective implementation. He said: “I want to emphasize that the success of this project and the full implementation of the NAP depend on strong coordination, commitment, and the collaborative spirit that unites us today. Together, we can make significant strides toward eradicating human trafficking in Nigeria and safeguarding the rights and dignity of every individual.” The Representative of the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Dr Omar Alieu Touray, Mr Tunde Olayemi (ECOWAS) said effective coordination is critical to achieving Africa without child trafficking. He said all hands must be on deck for a safe continent for women and children to live and achieve their potential. On its part, Miss Ojoma Ali, who represented the Ambassador of Switzerland to Nigeria said “Nigeria free from human trafficking is our ultimate goal, and we also stand by that Switzerland front this project.” The Swiss government commended NAPTIP for its consistent action on the prevention and prosecution of human trafficking crimes and suspects. The representative of the Ambassador of United States, Mr Micheal Berenton said it is critically important that the different organisations and agencies, look at the complex system of human trafficking and” look at where we can make a meaningful impact. So when we move from policy to action, those actions are influencing this complex system in a positive way that meets all of our shared goals.”