

Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme

YEEP Africa 2023



PRESS RELEASE

NIGERIA AND UNOCT CONVENE A YOUTH FOCUSED NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE ON PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Abuja (Nigeria), 16 January 2024 – A two-day National Policy Dialogue aimed at fostering meaningful engagement with young people for a safer, more resilient communities kicked-off today in Abuja, Nigeria. The dialogue is organized by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)/United Nations Counter-Terrorism Center (UNCCT) in collaboration with the Federal Government of Nigeria through the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA).

Featuring 22 young leaders from 12 States across Nigeria, the event provides a direct platform for youth to engage with Government from Federal and State representatives, Civil Society Organizations, United Nations senior officials and other key policymakers, on issues related to preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE). The young leaders will have the opportunity to make tangible recommendations on youth's role in the prevention of violent extremism efforts, outline challenges, and practical opportunities for future partnerships.

“As we reflect on YEEP Africa and the National Policy Dialogue, it's not the end; it's the beginning of our role as agents of change. It's about taking these learnings back to our communities, turning discussions into actions, and actively contributing to the national agenda against violent extremism,” emphasized a youth representative.

This National Policy Dialogue intends to build young Nigerian leaders' capacities in becoming change makers in PCVE. It directly supports Nigeria's counterterrorism policy on addressing structural problems and their implications on youth, which is a key priority for ONSA.

In August 2023, the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) established within ONSA and the UNOCT signed a Memorandum of Understanding, to enhance partnership in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism as well as other initiatives to counter terrorist travel.

At the event, the NCTC National Coordinator Rear Admiral, Yaminu Musa (rtd) reiterated that *this partnership is also aimed at enhancing border/maritime security while strengthening global regional and national responses through capacity-building programmes*. He added that *“Convening this National Youth Dialogue in collaboration with UNOCT is an essential step towards facilitating the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach in the provision of the needed coordination of all efforts to rid our country of terrorist activities and also towards ensuring safer and resilient society”*.

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This event is the capstone activity of UNOCT's Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme (YEEP), in collaboration with the Government of Nigeria, which was initiated 6 months ago.

In August 2023, Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov met with UNOCT's YEEP Nigeria young leaders in Abuja and reaffirmed UNOCT's commitment to work with, and for young people. *"It is time to build an alliance with youth. We don't have to wait to the future for young people to have a say and a role in shaping the world. Young people can have, and are already having, a positive and powerful impact on the world right now,"* he said.

This National Policy Dialogue in Nigeria marks the end of the first phase of YEEP Africa, which also comprises of the launch of tailored national YEEP programmes in two other African countries. The project will engage with more than 75 young African leaders from the three countries and build their skills to contribute to PCVE efforts and take more prominent roles in their community on cross-cutting issues related to PCVE. YEEP Africa will culminate in a regional policy dialogue in 2024 that will bring together the young people from all three countries from YEEP Africa, who have been part of this initiative, to share their experiences and lessons learned and seek opportunities for regional collaboration.

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