



**NIGERIA
HEALTH
WATCH**

Informed commentary, intelligence and insights on the Nigerian health sector



Celebrating Womanhood *Art Gala*

**HER STRENGTH IN EVERY STORY:
CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS
FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH**

#HealthMeetsArt

REPORT

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Programme of Events
2025 CELEBRATING WOMANHOOD ART GALA
- 28TH MARCH 2025
ABUJA CONTINENTAL HOTEL

Time	Activity	Person Responsible
16:00	Arrivals, Registration, Red Carpet & Cocktails	<i>All</i>
16:30	Walkthrough	All Curators Dr Ngozi Akande <i>Secretary, BOT, Female Artists Association of Nigeria (FEAAN)</i> Maryam Maigida <i>President, Female Artists Association of Nigeria (FEAAN)</i>
17:00	National Anthem	<i>All</i>
17:10	Welcome Address	Vivianne Ihekweazu <i>Managing Director, Nigeria Health Watch</i>
17:20	Opening Remarks	Iyadunni Olubode <i>Nigeria and Kenya Director, MSD for Mothers</i>
17:30	Spoken Word	Muhammed Al-amin Sanusi & Hannah Ajayi
17:40	Speak up for Women's Voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Binyerem Ukaire <i>Director, Department of Family Health, Federal Ministry of Health & Social Welfare</i> Rep. Federal Ministry of Women Affairs
18:00	Spoken Word	Prudence Enema
18:07	Speak up for Women's Voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Ahmed Sodangi <i>Director General, National Gallery of Arts</i> Dr. Ngozi Akande <i>Secretary, BOT, Female Artists Association of Nigeria (FEAAN)</i>
18:27	Fashion Show: "Walk with Her"	<i>Creative Designers</i>
19:07	Spoken Word	Stephen Eniyewu & Prudence Enema
19:22	Canvas Conversations: Through the Brushstrokes: Women's Voices in Maternal Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Adanna Steinacker <i>Senior Special Assistant to the President on Women's Health</i> Dr. Iniifo Iyang <i>Maternal and Neonatal Mortality Reduction Innovation Initiative (MAMII)</i> Polly Alakija <i>CEO, Five Cowries Arts Education Initiative</i> Olasunbo Makinde <i>Healthcare Quality Improvement Technical Specialist, Health Strategy and Delivery Foundation</i> Moderator Onyedikachi Ewe <i>Senior Programme Lead, Nigeria Health Watch</i>
19:42	Music by Orchestra & Live Art Performance	Obliz Conservatory for Music
19:57	FP2030	Yusuf Nuhu <i>Manager, Advocacy, Accountability & Partnerships, North, West & Central Africa, FP2030</i>
20:03	The Grand Reveal Artist's Speech	Safiya Shuaibu Isa <i>Deputy Director, Advocacy & Partnerships, Nigeria Health Watch</i>
20:13	Closing remarks	Dr. Kemisola Agbaoye <i>Director of Programmes, Nigeria Health Watch</i>

ACRONYMS



- ACE** Advocacy, Communication, and Evidence
- BEmONC** Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care
- CEmONC** Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care
- CSO** Civil Society Organisation
- FEAAN** Female Artists Association of Nigeria
- FP** Family Planning
- FOR M(om)** Financing & Operational Revitalisation for Maternal Care
- MAMII** Maternal and Neonatal Reduction Innovation and Initiative
- MDAs** Ministries, Departments and Agencies
- MMR** Maternal Mortality Ratio
- MPDSR** Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response
- NCAC** National Council for Arts and Culture
- NEMSAS** National Emergency Medical Service and Ambulance System
- NGA** National Art Gallery
- NHIA** National Health Insurance Authority
- NPHCDA** National Primary Health Care Development Agency
- PACS** Promoting Accreditation for Community Health Service
- SDG** Sustainable Development Goals
- SWAp** Sector Wide Approach
- UN** United Nations

INTRODUCTION



Every woman deserves comprehensive, quality, and life-saving healthcare, whether through reproductive health care, preventive care, mental health support or chronic disease management, because when women are healthy, families and communities thrive. Maternal health, a critical component of women's health remains an area of urgent concern in Nigeria, with an alarming maternal mortality ratio of 993 deaths per 100,000 live births, one of the highest in the world. This staggering figure reflects deep-rooted challenges in access to skilled care, emergency services, and quality health systems. Through history, we are reminded of the significant role women play in African societies, as entrepreneurs, women with power, influence and authority, leading in governance, economics and shaping the course of their societies. Therefore, in addition to saving lives, investing in women's health will unlock the full potential of half of the population, enabling women to lead, build and sustain the very fabric of society.

The Celebrating Womanhood Art Gala, conceptualised by Nigeria Health Watch in 2021, is a #HealthMeetsArts initiative designed to bring together stakeholders from various fields beyond the health sector, creating a space for meaningful discussions and cross-sectoral engagement on women. Art, with its unique ability to blend text and visuals, serves as a compelling tool to simplify complex issues, while highlighting the importance of equitable healthcare access for women. By elevating women's voices and integrating their experiences, the gala will emphasise the need for healthcare systems that truly responds to their demands. The approach of using arts in health advocacy aims to enhance the public awareness of maternal health challenges, making the issues more understandable to the target audience. By showcasing women and girls as agents of strength, the gala event inspires greater stakeholder engagement to prevent avoidable maternal deaths and ensure maternal healthcare is inclusive, accessible, and responsive to women's unique health challenges. The Celebrating Womanhood Art Gala elevates the need for women to reclaim their power and agency, fostering better maternal outcomes through greater empowerment and equitable healthcare access.

In 2021, Nigeria Health Watch launched the inaugural edition of the Celebrating Womanhood Art Gala, themed "A Story-telling Event" which was hosted in collaboration with the National Gallery of Art (NGA) and the Female Artists Association of Nigeria (FEAAN), bringing together art and health to champions to tell the story of the African woman through various forms of arts.

The second edition of the Celebrating Womanhood Art Gala was held to commemorate the International Women’s Month with the theme “Elevating Women’s Voices for Quality Maternal Healthcare,” the event aligned with the Advocacy, Communication, and Evidence (ACE) pillar of MSD for Mothers, which emphasises the importance of ensuring women’s perspectives are central to shaping maternal health policy and programming. The theme underscored a critical insight: when women’s needs and lived experiences are reflected in the design of healthcare systems, the result is greater satisfaction and more equitable outcomes for mothers everywhere.

The 2023 art gala was also hosted in collaboration with the National Gallery of Art (NGA) and the Female Artists Association of Nigeria (FEAAN), bringing together art and health to champion women’s voices. About 150 guests were in attendance from various sectors beyond health and 54 art pieces were curated.

The third edition of the Celebrating Womanhood Art Gala took place on Friday, 28th March 2025 commemorating International Women’s Month. It was themed “Her Strength in Every Story: Creative Expressions for Women’s health”. The theme served as a powerful reminder of the pivotal role that women have always played in shaping the world around us. The event inspired inclusive conversations on maternal health by highlighting diverse experiences especially from underserved communities, while raising awareness of ongoing challenges. Policymakers were engaged to strengthen maternal health policies focused on access, quality, and equity, and to foster partnerships that support sustainable, innovative solutions. This year’s Celebrating Womanhood Art Gala was once again organised in collaboration with the NGA and FEAAN, bringing together a vibrant mix of creativity to spotlight the experiences and resilience of the African woman. 178 participants from various sectors, ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), development partners, international partners, donors, implementing partners, civil society organisations and artistes were in physical attendance with 99 guests attending virtually. The Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, National Gallery of Arts, Female Artists Association of Nigeria, MSD for Mothers implementing collaborators; Promoting Accreditation for Community Health Service [PACS], Project Aisha, Financing & Operational Revitalisation for Maternal Care- FOR M(om), Smiles for Mothers and Digital Moms, which include Society for family health, SCIDAR, Helium health, mDoC, and HSDF were present. Five Cowries Arts Education Initiative, the Sector Wide approach (SWAp) National Coordination Office (implementing MAMII), and others were represented.

46

CURATED ARTWORKS FEATURED BY ARTISTS FROM AROUND NIGERIA.



The art gala opened with a guided walk-through led by Dr. Ngozi Akande, Curator and Secretary of the Board of Trustees of FEAAN and Maryam Maigida, who is the president of FEAAN. This session served as an entry point into deeper conversations on maternal healthcare. Attendees had the opportunity to explore the curated art pieces created by artists from across Nigeria. The artworks, expressed through a variety of media including discarded fabrics, acrylics with sombre tones, monochrome palettes, earthy hues, captured the raw emotions surrounding women's health. They reflected both the challenges within the healthcare system and the transformative joy experienced when the system truly meets the health needs of women.

SPEAK UP FOR WOMEN'S VOICES

Vivianne Ihekweazu,
Managing Director,
Nigeria Health Watch



“

“If we're not fully harnessing the strength of women- half of the population, then we're doing ourselves a great disservice. Maternal health is everyone's business, the health of women is a reflection of the health of our societies”

The critical link between women's economic empowerment and improved maternal health outcomes was established which underscores that when women have access to financial resources, they are better positioned to make informed health decisions, advocate for quality care, and influence policies that prioritise their well-being. Referencing Nigeria's rich history of women in leadership; from Funmilayo Ransom Kuti to Mary Nd-Moro, Vivianne pointed out the ongoing gender imbalance in key sectors and the need to bridge that gap by placing women at the centre of policy and decision-making. The Celebrating Womanhood Art Gala which is more than an artistic exhibition, is a rallying call to elevate the voices of women and recognise them as not just caregivers, but as leaders, change-makers and architects of progress. The guests were encouraged to reflect on the power of women's voices, engage with the artworks/ performances and commit to building a future where no woman loses her life simply for giving life.

Iyadunni Olubode
Nigeria & Kenya
Director, MSD for Mothers



"When you look at statistics like maternal mortality, the average does not tell the full story. Disparities are stark — in some parts of Nigeria, maternal mortality is over a thousand per 100,000 livebirths, while in others it's less than 500. Women's health outcomes should not depend on where they live."

Improving women's health goes beyond social justice to an economic imperative. The stark inequalities existing between different regions within the same country depicts an urgent need to address disparities in women's health across Nigeria. Two critical reasons why women's health must be prioritised are firstly, women are key contributors to the economy in Nigeria and globally, therefore closing the health gap between women and men can tremendously increase global GDP. Secondly, access to healthcare for women improves the overall health and well-being of families, as women often act as the "chief health officers" — managing healthcare decisions, ensuring immunisation schedules are kept, promoting proper nutrition, and overall supporting family health. The contributions of implementing partners working to strengthen Nigeria's health system was recognised and everyone was urged to continue to advocate for women's health in every space they occupy.

Mrs Janefrances Gbujie
Director of Educational Services
Department, National Gallery of Art



"Research has shown that art-based interventions during pregnancy and postpartum period impacts positively on maternal health care and wellbeing by enabling emotional expression, social connections, and stress reduction".

NGA values collaborations in promoting art as a tool for advocacy, to stir up meaningful conversations and bring necessary changes in maternal health care. Their role in using art exhibitions as a tool for social advocacy cuts across several other programs including Rainbow Art, Unlocking Creativity, and Saturday Art Club. The exhibitions reflect the enduring spirit of Nigeria's creative industry and reveals the power of art in raising awareness and driving social change. Encomiums are poured out to Nigeria Health Watch for collaborating with NGA on the third edition of Celebrating Womanhood Art Gala 2025, describing the initiative as apt as it creates a link between art and womanhood with the aim of harnessing the power of art to beam a spotlight on maternal health care..

Dr Ngozi Akande
Secretary Board of
Trustees, Female Artists
Association of Nigeria
(FEAAN)



The power of art in advocating for women's rights and empowerment cannot be overemphasised. Art offers a therapeutic space for women, making their voices heard in powerful, lasting ways. FEAAN, founded in 2001, uses various art forms like painting, poetry, drama as tools to spotlight issues affecting women including mental health, domestic violence, workplace struggles, political discrimination, and girl child abuse. Nigeria Health Watch is once again commended for their continued partnership as well as the artists whose works were showcased at the Gala, each piece depicting emotional labour and creativity.



“When we talk about women, we talk about their mental health even in their workplace. We talk about brutality in their homes. We talk about discrimination in politics... We use arts to make all these voices heard.”

Dr Zainab Bagudu
Managing Director
Medicaid



Empowering women means empowering communities and nations. Empowering resonates strongly with a dual impact of the art gala- raising awareness and empowering women, especially the female artists whose work were showcased and supported. Guests were therefore urged to incorporate women empowerment into their work, regardless of the profession. Arts in health advocacy can also be leveraged to create awareness on other NCDs like cancer.



“...Our health systems are weak, access is poor, knowledge is poor. So, whenever we find a way in which we can spread our message to our people, to the community, it is always welcome. And art..is a really good way of putting the message across and making sure that we have more awareness, particularly on women's health.”

**Princess
Jummai
Edonije**
Senior Special
Assistant to the
Minister of
Women Affairs



The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs is committed to advancing women's rights, health, and empowerment across all sectors, including health, education, governance, and the creative industry. Creative expressions like poetry, painting, music, and documentaries are powerful tools for advocacy, healing, and social change, especially around issues such as maternal mortality, domestic violence, and gender inequality. Art not only tells women's stories but also compels action and helps survivors reclaim their voices.

The Ministry's new vision ensures that gender issues are mainstreamed across all government policies and programs, including the creation of a desk for creative arts and key priorities from the recent 69th UN Commission on the Status of Women, includes women's leadership, digital inclusion, and economic justice. However, progress for women is essential for national development and cannot be achieved by government alone. It requires collaboration with civil society, media, artists, and other stakeholders. Beyond the international women's month, there should be sustained commitment for action, policy implementation, and collective responsibility towards investing in women's health and voices. This will create a stronger, more prosperous Nigeria.

SPOKEN WORD

The spoken word segment of the art gala served as a creative and emotive expression of the core themes driving the MSD for Mothers initiative in Nigeria. Interwoven throughout the event, five compelling performances by different spoken word artists were presented intermittently to share the stories, challenges, and triumphs surrounding maternal health and to spotlight various intervention by MSD for Mothers collaborators in Nigeria. The segment called attention to the urgent need for equitable access to healthcare and reinforced the importance of centering women’s lived experiences in advocacy and policy conversations. These following Spoken word performances were delivered at the 2025 Celebrating Womanhood Art Gala.



HER POWER

The poem honours the woman as a resilient force, a silent warrior who does not need permission to be heard. It challenges the quality of care women receive during childbirth, and in society at large, emphasising that their pain should never be normalised and no woman should be left behind.

Muhammed Al-amin Sanusi



A PROMISE OF CARE.

This spoken word performance highlights IntegratE- PACS project as a transformative force, training, equipping, empowering community pharmacists and health care providers to rebuild a broken health system. It highlights the tragic consequences of neglect, delayed care, and under-resourced facilities, and then shifts from despair to hope for a better health system, where every life counts, and no one is left behind.

Hannah Ajayi



CLAIRVOYANCE OF TODAY

This performance highlights how digital tools by mDoc like the Complete Health and NaviHealth app through the Digital Moms Project are transforming maternal care, empowering women with knowledge, to take full control of their maternal health journey and information to promptly access healthcare. The poem celebrates the shift from passive hope to informed action, from guessing to guidance, from isolation to connection and concludes with a powerful line that “our life is not just a number. It's a story, long, full and must be told with joy.”

Prudence Enema



GRIEF HAS NO LANGUAGE

The poem is a heartfelt tribute to a lost wife, Aisha, who died from postpartum haemorrhage. The poem criticizes a broken maternal healthcare system, where negligence, lack of awareness, and inadequate care claim lives unnecessarily. It highlights the need for informed choices, better access to antenatal care, and stronger health systems. Beyond the grief, it is also a rallying cry, a call to action to educate, empower, and protect women to ensure they are alive and well (Project Aisha) and that no more lives are lost due to preventable complications.

Stephen Eniyewu



JOURNEY TO HOPE

A personal reflection on maternal loss and the journey from pain to hope. The poem critiques systemic healthcare failures that enable maternal deaths, but declares a new era: one of change, safety, and dignity for all mothers with the intervention by FOR M(om). The poem ends on a note of victory and renewed resolve, a celebration of progress and a commitment to ending maternal mortality.

Prudence Enema



HER SMILE BEGINS

The poem reflects on the pain and tragedy of maternal mortality, beginning with the personal experience of the speaker hearing the cry of a newborn and the mourning of a mother lost during childbirth due to postpartum haemorrhage, the leading cause on global maternal deaths. The poem celebrates the impact of Smiles for Mothers in Nigeria, driven by HSDF, SCIDAR, and CHAI, bringing better care and smiles to mothers across Nigeria.

Hannah Ajayi

WALK WITH HER FASHION SHOW

An engaging fashion show themed 'Walk with Her' showcased fashion designers and their craft during the Art Gala. Jeffrey Bent stated that when you empower a woman, you empower a nation, when you give her a seed, she makes a fruitful garden and a global impact. The creative industry is beyond entertainment and women play a critical role in the industry. He called for supporting women in making a change in the nation. Five fashion designers: Umoeka Esther Jacob, CEO Estiejakes fashion brand, Organizer Sheake, Rara- Avis Simply Unique, Affi Susan Amevhie, creative lead Sozo Clothing Brand, Samira Mohammed, CEO Sultana and Aisha Abubakar Achonu, creative lead Aisha Abu-Bakr showcased their carefully curated pieces on the fashion runway. The fashion show served as a strategic platform to enhance brand visibility and foster meaningful linkages between participating fashion brands and participants within the fashion industry, thereby promoting opportunities for future collaboration and patronage.

Estiejakes fashion collection is inspired by her single mother. Using two models on the runway, the collection highlights the virtues of a mother as beautiful, strong, elegant, a teacher and one who imparts care and health to her children and community at large. It also elaborates the need to remind mothers that they too need the care they give.

Rara- Avis Simply Unique embodies women as the bearer of new beginnings and nurturers.



The F- Woman collection is more than just clothing; it reflects the journey every woman takes. From mating to mother, from love to life, from transformation to renewal. She moves through each stage with effortless beauty and no matter where she stands, she remains the heart of the earth.

Beyond the veil collection by Sozo Collection raises awareness on postpartum depression which many women go through. The first piece is concealed, made with organza and sheer fabrics, symbolising the fragility and emotional vulnerability of a new mother. The second piece is revealed, representing healing and the strength found through scars a woman goes through after childbirth. The designer showcased the collection with two models walking the runway.






The Sultana collection speaks to how important women are in the production of the entire pieces. It highlights and celebrates the unique touch of women and their vital role in the process of making the pieces such as tie and dye.

The Oudega collection by Aisha Abu-Bakr fashion brand is inspired by the personal experience of the fashion designer who was a young cotton farmer at the age of 10. Oudega which means cotton in Hausa, is a collection made from a process of love, artisanship and empowerment. The lightweight hand-woven Saiki fabric, which is found in most of the pieces, is a fabric made in Northern Nigeria with a rich history of being used for kings and brides back in the day.



CANVAS CONVERSATIONS

THROUGH THE BRUSHSTROKES: WOMEN’S VOICES IN MATERNAL HEALTH

				
ONYEDIKACHI EWE	DR ADANNA STEINACKER	POLLY ALAKIJA	DR. INIOFO IYANG	DR. OLASUNMBO MAKINDE
Senior Programme Manager – Nigeria Health Watch Moderator	Senior Special Assistant to the President on Women’s Health	CEO - Five Cowries Arts Education Initiative.	Sexual and Reproductive health expert - SWAP Coordinating office	Healthcare Quality Improvement Technical Specialist - Health Strategy and Delivery Foundation



Dr Adanna Steinacker

Senior Special Assistant to the President on Women’s Health

Dr. Adanna acknowledged a significant milestone in Nigeria’s Journey towards equity, the establishment of the office for Women’s health in the Presidency, an action that had not been undertaken prior to the current administration. The office is a structure put in place to ensure that women’s voices are heard, and the issues of women’s health is not sidelined.

Improving maternal health outcomes does not require reinventing the wheel, as most necessary policies already exist. The key challenge is implementation, which hinges on strong collaboration across all sectors; government, private sector, NGOs, and individuals. Maternal health is not solely a government responsibility; everyone has a role to play.



Dr. Iniofo Iyang

Sexual and Reproductive health expert - SWAP
Coordinating office

Dr. Iniofo presented an overview of the Maternal and neonatal mortality reduction innovation and initiative (MAMII), a national effort to crash maternal and neonatal mortality through a multisectoral approach. In collaboration with agencies like National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), National Emergency Medical Service and Ambulance System (NEMSAS), MAMII provides obstetric complication treatment, free caesarean section and emergency transport to vulnerable women in hard-to-reach communities.

She also emphasised the critical collaboration with National Primary Health Care Development Agency and how they are renovating 350 Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (BEmONC) and 54

Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (CEmONC) Centres. This is to ensure conducive and functional facilities operating 24 hours/day in every community. MAMII will prioritize women's voices by conducting social and verbal autopsies in MPDSR implementation and use findings to co-create more effective, context-specific initiatives that address real needs and encourage safer delivery choices.



Dr. Olasunmbo Makinde

Healthcare Quality Improvement Technical
Specialist - Health Strategy and Delivery
Foundation

Dr. Olasumbo shared how Project Aisha is reducing maternal deaths and obstetric complications by addressing the systemic drivers of maternal deaths at three levels targeting the community, facility and health system. The project empowers women and their partners to make informed decision regarding their health, improves quality of care by training providers on quality improvement and incorporates patient feedback systems using digital health solutions with NaviHealth app. Project Aisha has reached over 200,000 women in communities, with a target to achieve a 40% reduction in maternal mortality in Lagos and Kaduna state.

Dr. Olasumbo emphasised that listening to women's experiences and preferences is central to the project's success. "When women walk into a health facility, we ask questions like, what do you want,

what do you expect, what makes this facility feel less superior in your mind than the traditional birth attendants you are used to?" Project Aisha uses women's preferences, perceptions, and experiences as valuable points to shape how services are delivered and improved.



Polly Alakija

CEO - Five Cowries Arts Education Initiative.

Polly Alakija, CEO of the Five Cowries Arts Education Initiative, believes that art is a powerful way to learn, connect, and bring about change. Through Five Cowries, children are supported to grow in literacy and numeracy, but for young women, the focus is improving health outcomes. Furanni, a project implemented in partnership with Nigeria Health Watch is an art-based sexual and reproductive health programme designed to empower girls and young women with the right tools, knowledge and confidence required to make informed choices about their health. At the centre of Furanni is a welcoming hub where young women gather to learn, share, create, and support each other. They take part in textile-based activities like embroidery, stitching, and knitting.

But these sessions are not just craft workshops, they are spaces where conversations about menstruation, reproductive health, and body awareness happen openly and without shame. Polly added that the programme uses art as a form of advocacy, through trickle-down advocacy, and bubble-up advocacy.

A key part of what makes Furanni work is that the girls are involved from the beginning. Their voices helped shape the programme. “Some of the young women even helped design a special fabric worksheet and came up with their own names for stitches like “Hold my Hand” and “Walk with Me” which reflect their personal experiences. These details may seem small, but they’re deeply meaningful. This shows that the programme isn’t just delivered to the girls, it is built with them.



THE GRAND REVEAL

A key highlight of the Art Gala was the grand reveal of a masterpiece, a special artwork, crafted by young women from the Dala Hub in Kano State, through the FURANNI project (meaning "Fresh Blooms"), in collaboration with Five Cowries Art in health Education. The artwork was an embroidery designed to represent a woman's journey, understanding, experiences, challenges, and commitment to improving her maternal health with each section of the embroidery representing various aspects of maternal health, from menstrual hygiene to family planning and antenatal care. The unveiling of the masterpiece was led by Saifya Isa Shuaib, Deputy Director, Advocacy and Partnerships at Nigeria Health Watch, together with young girls from the Furanni Project and Vivianne Ihekweazu, Managing Director, Nigeria health watch. In her speech, Safiya highlighted the significance of safe spaces for young girls to discuss critical topics like family planning and sexual and reproductive health. She recognised the young girls involved in creating the piece, celebrating their efforts in this meaningful project. The embroidery will continue to serve as a conversation starter for the need for accessible healthcare information to women and young girls.

COLLABORATIONS

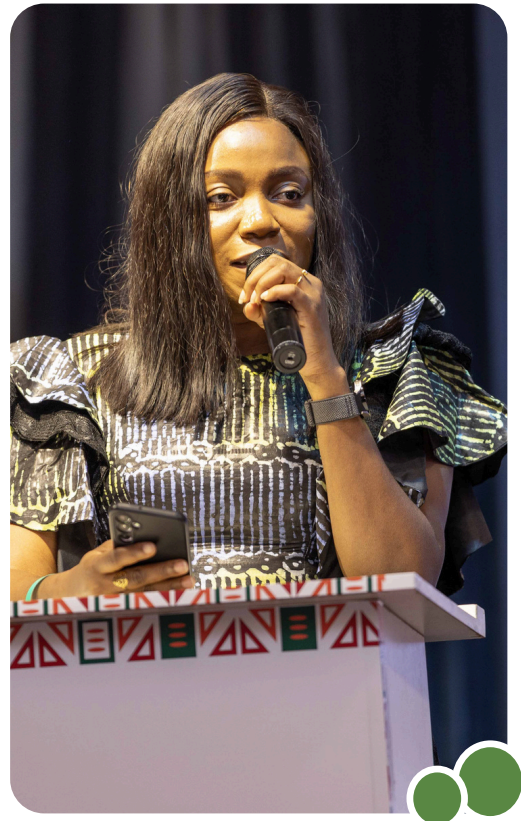
Nigeria Health Watch collaborated with actors from both the health and non-health sector in the design and delivery of the event. This included The Female Artist Association of Nigeria (FeANN) and National Gallery for Arts (NGA), National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) in the curation of the art pieces and selection of relevant art performers.

Other collaborations included Five Cowries Arts in Health Education in the design and grand reveal of the masterpiece and FP 2030, who leveraged the event to make a presentation on "Made Possible by Family Planning 2030."

Family Planning 2030, a global partnership focused on advancing access to family planning, leveraged the Celebrating Womanhood Art Gala platform to announce the launch of a new collective campaign titled "Made Possible by Family planning". This community led global campaign aims to build a world where everyone, everywhere has the right to decide if, when and how to start a family. The campaign highlights what family planning makes possible which included allowing girls to stay in school, allowing women to advance their career, promoting healthy families, striving communities and economic empowerment. Participants were encouraged to share their stories on how family planning has transformed their lives using the hashtag "#MadePossibleByFamilyPlanning".

CONCLUSION

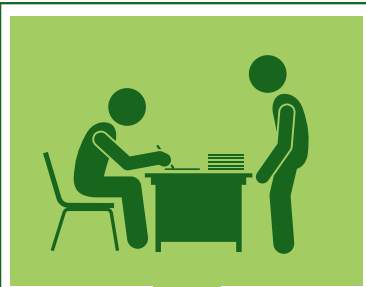
The Celebrating Womanhood Art Gala reminds us again of the strength and resilience of women, and the importance of investing in maternal and reproductive health. Through creativity and storytelling, the Art Gala depicts the power of women's voices and their commitment to change. The creativity unveiled is a vivid testament to the courage and determination to break down barriers in healthcare. Kemisola Agbaoye, Director of Programmes at Nigeria Health Watch, in her closing remarks, reminds the audience of the importance of listening to women's voices in shaping effective health solutions. It's not enough to design interventions based on assumptions; we must align them with what truly matters to women, ensuring that they have a seat at the table and that their voices are central to every decision made



Kemisola Agbaoye,
Director of Programmes at
Nigeria Health Watch,

IMPACT SUMMARY

PHYSICAL ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION



309

people registered to attend the event



277

people attended the event



38.6%
of attendees are from the NGO sector



20.9%
of attendees are from the government sector



11.6%
of attendees from the private sector



8.2%
of attendees are from the media



9.7%
of attendees are from international organizations



1%
of attendees are from health institution and the banking industry

62.76% of attendees were female


37.24% of attendees were male.

ENGAGEMENT METRICS

SOCIAL MEDIA (PRE, DURING AND POST-CONFERENCE)

Between January 1st and May 5th, 2025, the hashtag #HealthMeetsArt, launched for the Celebrating Womanhood Art Gala (CWAG) 2025, generated 6,455 engagements and 39,716 impressions online. Notably, 45.62% (2,945) of these engagements occurred between January 1st and 27th March 2025, the day before the event. On the event day, an additional 14.11% (911) of these engagements were recorded, with the remaining 40.27% (2,599) generated between March 29th and May 5th, 2025.

Key additional Metrics:


Impressions
39,716


Engagements
6,455


post-reactions
2,321

Engagement
rate of
16.3%

Several high-profile individuals and organisations contributed to the amplification and impact of the recent CWAG event. Ngozi Akande, Director at the National Council for Arts and Culture, shared reflections on the gathering, spotlighting its cultural and advocacy dimensions. Zainab Shinkafi Bagudu, UICC President-Elect and leading voice on maternal health, posted a comprehensive call to action urging stakeholders to intensify efforts toward improving maternal healthcare in Nigeria. Similarly, Richard Oghenekome Akpotareno of Options Consultancy Services echoed this advocacy in his post, reinforcing the urgent need for sustained engagement. The Female Artist Association of Nigeria (FEAAN) also contributed to the momentum, emphasizing their support through curated artistic works aligned with the theme, “Art as a Catalyst for Improved Maternal Healthcare.” Women in Global Health, Nigeria chapter, among others, joined in with a powerful advocacy message underscoring the intersection of health and gender equity. Collectively, these posts expanded the reach of the campaign and mobilized broader support for maternal health issues in the country.

These contributions underscore the substantial online attention and engagement garnered by CWAG 2025, showcasing its success in advocating for improved maternal health, and calling key stakeholders to action.

Volume Summary

View the volume for tagged published posts, sent messages, and received messages during the publishing period.

Tagged Published Posts

109

Tagged Sent Messages

—

Tagged Received Messages

—

Published Post Performance Summary

View your key aggregated tag performance metrics from the publishing period.

Impressions

39,895

Engagements

6,463

Engagement Rate (per impression)

16.2%






Post Link Clicks

2,545

Top Posts

View the top tagged published posts from the publishing period.

Descending by Lifetime Engagements

Post Preview	Total Engagements	Reactions	Comments	Shares	Post Clicks (All)
<p>Nigeria Health Watch Sun 3/28/2023 2:58 pm CET</p> <p>Her Strength In Every Story: Creative Expressions for Women's Health Last night, creativity met courage at the...</p> 	1,132	55	3	6	1,068
<p>Nigeria Health Watch Sun 3/20/2023 4:57 pm CET</p> <p>Art has the power to move people in ways that statistics and reports cannot. It doesn't just inform; it challenges...</p> 	741	48	2	4	687
<p>Nigeria Health Watch Mon 3/11/2023 11:33 am CET</p> <p>Women are at the heart of our families, communities, and society. They nurture, lead, and build, often...</p> 	446	52	2	5	387
<p>@nighealthwatch Thu 1/9/2023 12:44 pm CET</p> <p>In 2021, Nigeria Health Watch conceptualised the Celebrating Womanhood Art Gala. The event is a...</p> 	287	210	4	28	0
<p>Nigeria Health Watch Thu 3/13/2023 8:51 pm CET</p> <p>Every woman has a story. Some are whispered in pain, others are shouted in defiance. A girl navigating her first...</p> 	211	45	2	7	157

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT (ZOOM AND YOUTUBE ANALYSIS)

A total of
ninety-nine

99

people participated
in the event online



80% (79)

joined the event
via YouTube



20% (20)

joined the event
via Zoom

YouTube recorded an additional 51 views between March 28th and May 5th 2025, bringing the total virtual engagement metrics for the conference to the following:



130
total views
on YouTube

contributing to

25.7

hours of total
watch time



an average view
duration of

11:51

hours



1,800

impressions as
of May 5th, 2025.



A total of
4,567

video views across
all platforms

2,306



minutes of total
virtual stream
time on Zoom.



A total of
201 clicks

were generated depicting
the total number of
audiences that engaged with
our linktree.

CELEBRATING WOMANHOOD ART GALA (CWAG) 2025 IN THE NEWS

The Celebrating Womanhood Art Gala (CWAG) 2025 received extensive traditional media coverage, advocating on maternal health, equity, and access to quality healthcare for women. A radio station, Kapital FM aired discussions, reaching 1,244 listeners.

Three television stations; NTA, Kaftan TV, and Arise TV broadcasted event-related content, generating 11,564 total viewers. NTA aired discussions reaching 10,427 viewers- 45.45% male (4,739) and 54.55% female (5,688), Kaftan TV reached 948 viewers, and Arise TV reached 1,896 viewers.

DISPLAYED ART PIECES

A total of 46 art pieces were displayed at the event.



POST EVENT SURVEY

A post-event survey was conducted to gather comprehensive response into the lasting impact of the event. We received a 100% completion rate, and the findings below were drawn up based on the responses.

70.59%

of total participants rated the use of art as a tool for advocating improved maternal healthcare as extremely effective.

64.71%

reported that the event significantly increased their awareness of the challenges surrounding maternal healthcare in Nigeria.

58.82%

of respondents reported that the “Spoken word and live art” performance aspect of the event resonated with them the most, 47.06% reported “Art exhibition and walk-through, Fashion show: 'Walk with her” and “Panel discussion (Canvas Conversations)” resonated with them the most, on the other hand, 17.65% reported the “The Grand Reveal” as the aspect of the event that resonated with them the most.

41.18%

reported “Strengthening healthcare policies and funding” as the most urgent action needed to improve maternal healthcare in Nigeria, 29.41% reported “Increasing awareness and education on maternal health” and “Improving access to quality maternal healthcare services” as top priorities.

76.47%

reported that they were very likely to take action (e.g., advocacy, donations, policy engagement) in support of maternal healthcare following the event.

52.94%

reported they established between 1-2 new professional connections or collaborations as a result of attending the event, 23.53% reported they established between 3-5 new professional connections, 11.76% reported they established more than 5 and another 11.76% reported they did not establish new professional connections or collaborations.

82.35%

reported they saw opportunities for collaboration and partnerships emerging from the event.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CWAG GALA:

VOICES DRIVING THE WOMEN'S HEALTH AGENDA IN NIGERIA

At the recent Celebrating Womanhood Art Gala (CWAG), key voices across sectors came together to spotlight urgent issues in maternal health and explore how creative partnerships can spark sustainable solutions. From government leaders to artists and program implementers, each speaker emphasized a shared vision: a Nigeria where no woman dies giving life.

01 Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

Across interviews, the importance of partnerships was a central theme cutting across government, private sector, NGOs, creatives, and community actors. Participants emphasised that improving maternal health is not the responsibility of a single sector but requires a "whole-of-society" approach.



Iyadunni Olubode, The Nigeria Director, MSD for Mothers spoke about the critical role of creatives and innovators in creating awareness and addressing systemic health inequities. "Maternal health is everyone's business—private sector, public sector, creatives, NGOs, innovators... This sort of event brings stakeholders around the table."



Adanna Steinacker, the SSA to the President on Women's Health highlighted the presidency's inter-ministerial collaboration efforts, specifically linking health and women's affairs. "There's no need to reinvent the wheel," she mentioned. "The policies already exist. My job is to ensure implementation, to break silos, and to connect ministries, civil society, and communities."

02 Health as an Economic and Social Imperative

Several speakers emphasised the economic value of women's health, noting its direct impact on GDP and family wellbeing.



Iyadunni, The Nigeria Director, MSD for Mothers underscored how investing in women's health improves national productivity, citing studies that estimate a \$1 trillion global opportunity in closing the health gap between men and women. "Women count. Women improve the economic outcomes of a nation... A study estimated closing the health gap could be worth up to \$1 trillion globally"

03 Awareness and Education as Catalysts for Change

Education emerged as both a preventive tool and a critical gap. There's an urgent need to raise public awareness about antenatal care, complications like postpartum haemorrhage, and the benefits of timely medical intervention.

This theme was strongly emphasised by Iyadunni in the context of routine maternal care and the underestimated value of antenatal visits.

"Antenatal care is important. It's not just happy clappy time to sing with healthcare workers, it is where you're examined and prepped.

People need to understand what the challenges are... so they can bring their creative genius to solve them."

04 Mental Health and Artistic Expression

Ngozi Akande, the Director, National Council for Arts and Culture introduced a deeply personal and powerful theme—maternal mental health, including postpartum depression. She linked this to the power of art as therapy, showcasing how visual storytelling can both depict trauma and help in healing.

The interview highlighted how artists are integrating lived maternal experiences into their work, offering both visibility and catharsis. “I broke down and I started crying... Most of the works on display depict the after-effects women go through —pensive, depressed.”
“Art can help... By the time you look at colours, it’s therapeutic—it can heal you.”

05 Community-Based Health Interventions and Access

Iniofo Iyang, Sexual and Reproductive Expert, SWAp Coordination Office (MAMII) detailed the MAMI initiative’s integrated approach across 172 LGAs, highlighting infrastructure readiness, referral pathways, community health workers (CHIPs), and transport vouchers (NEMSAS) as part of a holistic model to reduce maternal deaths.



This theme blends policy innovation with local implementation, showing how national initiatives are grounded in grassroots engagement. “Community engagement is looking at the facility readiness, functional facilities open 24 hours. They [community health workers] map pregnant women to facilities and transport system and do one-to-one counselling.”

06 Policy, Implementation, and Accountability

A significant insight from Adanna Steinacker was the gap between policy design and implementation. She noted that Nigeria doesn’t lack maternal health policies; what’s missing is execution and cross-sector accountability.



“There’s no point reinventing the wheel. The problem is not policy; it’s implementation and working in silos. My office exists to ask: how can I collaborate with what’s already happening?”

07 Autonomy and Reproductive Health

Reproductive autonomy and access to family planning were highlighted as crucial to reducing maternal mortality



Adanna emphasised the importance of enabling women to control the timing and spacing of pregnancies as part of a larger maternal health strategy.

“We have to address the reproductive age of women getting pregnant and put the autonomy of family planning into their hands.” “We’re looking at the full spectrum—from adolescence until menopause.”

CONFERENCE IN PICTURES







About Nigeria Health Watch

Nigeriahealth Watchis a not-for-profit healthcommunication and advocacy organisation that seeks to advocate for better health for Nigerians.We have worked to actively engage and support the government in raising awareness and increasing knowledge on a wide range of health issues in Nigeria. We aim to hold duty bearers accountable for delivering affordable and quality healthcare to Nigerians. The unique capacity of Nigeria Health Watch lies in the combination of its communication and health expertise, which enables the organisation to provide solutions for evidence- based communications and advocacy in the health sector.



Informed commentary, intelligence and insights on the Nigerian health sector

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