COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF ONE DAY CIVIL SOCIETY WORKSHOP ON LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY ADVOCACY ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION AND HEALTH IN NIGERIA ORGANIZED BY THE CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE (CISLAC) HELD AT CHIMCHERY INTERNATIONAL HOTEL, KADUNA ON FRIDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER, 2015.

PREAMBLE:

Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) organized one day Civil Society Workshop on Legislative and Policy Advocacy on Agriculture, Nutrition and Health in Nigeria. The meeting aimed at training civil society groups to understand and effectively demand accountability on Nigeria’s legislative and policy process in the areas of health, nutrition and agriculture. The meeting drew over 30 participants from various civil society groups working on health, agriculture and nutrition. It featured Mrs. M.O Omotoso, Dr. David Olayemi, represented by Mr. Ifedilichukwu Ekene Innocent, Chioma Kanu as the lead presenters. After exhaustive deliberations on various thematic issues, the following observations and recommendations were made:

OBSERVATIONS

1. Hitherto, effective implementation of various programmes and policies on agriculture has suffered from administrative inconsistency, lack of sustainability, weak coordination and corruption.
2. Reliance on specific provisions in the existing legislation like Land Use Act by authorities in land grabbing from local farmers, remains an impeding challenge to the local food production capacity.
3. Over-concentration on traditional farming system by local farmers and insufficient knowledge of modern farming system has discouraged commercialization and exportation of Nigerian agricultural productivity.
4. Lack local storage system and inadequate marketing channels result in persistent wastages and financial loss to local agricultural productivity.
5. Lack of domestication and implementation of the ratified international protocols, conventions and treaties on agriculture; and non-compliance with global food production standards and practices impede efforts at producing internationally acceptable agricultural products.
6. Food security and optimal nutrition status remain fundamental to healthy living, secured lives and nation’s development, while malnutrition results in mental retardation in children, low productivity, slowed economic growth, and poor education achievements.
7. Poverty, corruption, failure in governance, inadequate access to health care, poor food intake and poor feeding habit within the family have largely contributed to high level malnourishment, stunting and wasting in various parts of the country.

8. Poor coordination on nutrition intervention, inadequate fund for key nutrition interventions, and delay in creation of policy environment are among factor hindering adequate nutrition level.

9. In spite of the various national, regional, continental and global commitments by Nigeria on the health sector, adequate healthcare provision remains a serious challenge at all levels.

10. Lack of domestication and implementation of the existing legislation, protocols, and conventions on health sabotages efforts at achieving global best practices in healthcare services.

11. Inadequate allocation to health sector, corruption, delay in release of funds, and lack of judicious utilization of the existing funds, backpedal timely provision of healthcare services at all levels.

12. Lack of evidenced-based budgetary provision by various authorities to properly ascertain and adequately provide for the needed healthcare services in the country.

13. Lack of autonomy to Local Governments has impeded adequate intervention on health at grassroots.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants recommended as follows:

1. Creation of enabling environment to encourage youth participation in agriculture productivity, using required incentive schemes; and promotion of rural infrastructure to maximize small scale farming, enhance local food production and food security.

2. Improved varieties in agricultural productivity through modern skilled-driven capacity building for local farmers; increased access to land for farmers; and creation of water access to live stocks to improve agricultural production capacity and mitigate farmer-herdsmen tussles.

3. Integrated food production, storage, processing and industrial manufacturing by value chains to enhance agricultural productivity, commercialization and profitability.

4. Encouraged investment-driven strategic partnerships with private sector to unlock potential in agricultural productivity.

5. Prompt transformation of existing agricultural plans and policies into comprehensive legislation to promote administrative sustainability and consistency; and building
synergy among civil society groups to create formidable force demanding accountability on agriculture.

6. Effective domestication and implementation of various international protocols, convention and treaties on agriculture to improve global acceptable food production standards and practices.

7. Good governance, proper individuals and feeding habit, exclusive breastfeeding, food security to combat malnutrition at all levels.

8. Understanding the roles of relevant stakeholders and demand accountability on nutrition at all levels.

9. Increased investment in nutrition to achieve full individual potential, and accelerate key national health and economic targets.

10. Improved coordination of nutrition intervention, bio-fortification of food and agriculture produce, adequate funding for key nutrition interventions, prompt creation of policy environment, and timely recruitment and training of nutrition officers at all levels.

11. Effective domestication and implementation of the National Health Act at state level to promote adequate provision healthcare services.

12. Exhaustive tracking and monitoring of budgetary released, and information dissemination by civil society, especially at grassroots levels to promote transparency and accountability in the health sector.

13. Proper individual orientation to affect positive change in governance; well-informed civil society to supporting citizens’ demand for accountability; sustained evidence-based advocacy with credible database; and increase executive-legislative oversight on existing facilities and fund utilization at all levels.

14. Adequate autonomy to the Local Governments to affect positive change in healthcare provision at the grassroots.

**CONCLUSION**

The participants expressed appreciation to CISLAC for embarking on the training channeled towards capacity building for civil society capacity to understand and effectively demand accountability on Nigeria’s legislative and policy process in the areas of agriculture, nutrition and health. The participant demonstrated willingness to continue partnering with CISLAC on the initiative. Participants further expressed gratitude to the organizers noting that the engagement was revealing and indeed an opportunity to begin to engage legislative process on health, nutrition and agriculture.

*Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani)*

Executive Director, CISLAC
It is worrisome that despite various international, continental and regional commitments by successive administrations on adequate budgetary to the health sector, the sector continues to suffer persistent policy neglect and decline in budgetary allocation. This has not only hampered efforts at delivery Basic Health Care Package, but impeded adequate, accessible and affordable healthcare services across the country.

Corruption, delay in release of funds, and lack of judicious utilization of the existing funds, backpedal timely provision of healthcare services at all levels. Also, lack of evidenced-based budgetary provision by various authorities to properly ascertain and adequately provide for the needed healthcare services in the country.