COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF 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 CHESTERFIELD HOTEL, IKEJA LAGOS ON WEDNESDAY 7TH OCTOBER, 2015.

PREAMBLE:

Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) organized 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, Mallam Y.Z Ya’u and Chioma Kanu as the lead presenters. After exhaustive deliberations on various thematic issues, the following observations and recommendations were made:

OBSERVATIONS

1. So far, administrative inconsistency in policy implementation on agriculture and abuse of office has impeded sustainable intervention in the agricultural sector.
2. Although Lagos state government has introduced e-extension service to provide farmers with relevant information on agricultural extension services in the state, however, widespread awareness of the service, especially in the grassroots requires improvement.
3. Inadequate extension agents to provide interface between farmers, government and researchers for effective service delivery.
4. Inadequate information on modern farming system, lack of compliance to global farming standards discourages profitable exportation of Nigerian agricultural exportation.
5. Inadequate awareness by farmers of the existing financial incentives on agriculture impedes appreciative accessibility by farmers across the grassroots in Lagos State.
6. Ineffectiveness of the existing regulatory bodies on agriculture productivity hampers efforts at regulating consumption of local and imported agricultural produce, endangering consumers’ health.
7. Poor health system, unethical attitude of healthcare workers, and low doctor-to-patients ratio across the country discourage public accessibility to adequate healthcare services.
8. Healthcare system in Nigeria is structure across Primary, Secondary and Tertiary facilities in the local, state and federal governments, respectively.
9. Delay in the release of budgetary allocation to health and lack of well-defined administrative responsibility at Local Government level remain a challenge to adequate facilities and legislative oversight on healthcare across the grassroots.

10. Inadequate oversight on healthcare system allows for poor utilization of the existing budgetary allocation to the health sector.

11. While adequate food and optimal nutrition status are fundamental to build healthy and secured lives and nation’s development, malnutrition retards growth, mental development and productivity.

12. Malnutrition is driven by ignorant, failure in government, food insecurity, inadequate healthcare, inappropriate food intake, institutional weakness, poverty, gender inequality, and existing socio-cultural sentiment.

13. Children from poor economic quartile remain the most vulnerable to malnutrition, and exclusive breast feeding stands lowly at 17% in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants recommended as follows:

1. Encouraged grassroots participation and private sector leadership in agricultural productivity to ensure sustainable effort and intervention to maximize agricultural profitability and food security.

2. Self-sufficient agricultural production system through strengthened regulatory institutions and strict compliance to global exportation standard specifications to enhance acceptability, exportation and profitability of agricultural productivity.

3. Embracing agricultural system as an investment with expected rate of return; and increased focus on agricultural value chain to re-orientate farmers on profitability agricultural investment from traditional notions on agricultural production.

4. Building synergy among local farmers in Lagos state to encourage widespread information on existing programmes and accessibility to financial incentives on agriculture; and active participation by civil society groups at the State Committee on Budget Meeting to ensure adequate budgetary allocation on agriculture.

5. Development of comprehensive agricultural development plan for transformation into legislation to promote sustainability in administrative agricultural intervention in Lagos state; and rural infrastructural development for adequate mobilization for extensive and small scale agricultural production.

6. Adequate understanding of the existing institutional functionality, programmes and policies on agriculture in Lagos State by civil society groups to create formidable force demanding accountability from relevant authorities on agricultural development.
7. Adequate, affordable and accessible health facilities in the country with appropriate
training and retraining programme for healthcare workers by government and
stakeholders at all levels to encourage public accessibility to healthcare services.
8. Constructive government-civil society interface and appropriate data gathering on
healthcare system across the state to inform evidence-based advocacy on adequate
healthcare system.
9. Adequate data generation for well-informed budgetary allocation; and systematic
tracking and monitoring of the existing fund provisions on health by civil society and
relevant stakeholders to promote judicious utilization of the allocated funds to the
healthcare system.
10. Mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in policy advocacy
programmes by civil society groups to canvass political response to adequate health
system at all levels.
11. Improve individual awareness on appropriate food intake, good governance, food
security, adequate healthcare, strengthened institution, poverty eradication, gender
equality, and proper orientation to reduce nutrition burden across the country.
12. Exclusive breastfeeding and adequate sanitary environment to avert child malnutrition
and mortality at all levels.

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.

1. Mrs. Foluke Ademokun
   Ajoke Ayisat Afolabi Foundation
2. Sunday John Udoh
   Healthcare Rehabilitation and Research Initiative
3. Mrs. Kuyoro Ekundayo
   TBS Foods
4. Mrs. Elizabeth E. A Daniel
   Lagos Agric

5. Tunde Opadeyi
Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency