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 KINI COUNTRY
HOTEL, AKWANGA NASSARAWA STATE ON THURSDAY 10TH DECEMBER, 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 40 participants from various civil society groups working on health,
agriculture and nutrition. It featured Dr. David Olayemi, Mrs. M.O Omotoso and Mallam Y.Z
Ya’u as the lead presenters. After exhaustive deliberations on various thematic issues, the
following observations and recommendations were made:

OBSERVATIONS

1. So far, Nigeria has formulated several policies, but backpedalled by administrative
   inconsistency, weak coordination, poor supervision, lack of continuity, needless
   introduction of new policies, and lack of institutional support for home grown
   agricultural initiatives.

2. Lack of agricultural extension service and social protection for famers, and poor
   communication between community and the government on land acquisition to drive
   expected growth and development in the nation’s agricultural sector.

3. Primitive approach to agricultural intervention, poor marketing strategy for agricultural
   products and inadequate storage facilities resulting in persistent wastage, loss of
   agricultural profitability.

4. Poor compliance with international standards on agricultural production discouraging
   exportation of agricultural productivity in profitable quantity.

5. Lack of training on proper use of agricultural resources, and poor record keeping skills
   by famers discourage effective tracking, monitoring and utilization of agricultural
   finance.

6. Delay in agricultural policies and programmes, inadequate agricultural investment,
   incentive and enabling facilities, and lack of systemic fund evaluation, discourage
   appreciable participation, especially by small scale famers in agricultural productivity at
   all levels.

7. Poor budgetary allocation and implementation, and diversion of existing funds
   hampering timely intervention in agricultural sector at all levels.
8. Poor access to water supply, inadequate river basin system and lack of harmonization of various sectors in agriculture among other problems have impeded irrigation farming and intensified farmer-herdsmen tussles.

9. As adequate food production and optimal nutrition are fundamental to secure lives and healthy living, malnutrition impedes individual’s mental and physical growth and effective performance.

10. While Nigeria is over-burden by over-nutrition and under-nutrition, malnutrition metamorphoses in over-nutrition, under-nutrition, mineral deficiency and vitamin deficiency, and 10% lower in individual’s lifetime earnings.

11. Poor intake of required foods classes, inappropriate and selective breastfeeding result in under-nutrition status and weak maternal and child immune growth and development at all levels.

12. Lack of coordination among various departments of government, inadequate intervention by private sector to promote food security, adequate medical care, and awareness on nutrition.

13. Inadequate training and retraining programmes for the states’ nutrition officers and weak legislative oversight to ensure accountability and improve budgetary performance on nutrition at all levels.

14. Delayed in the domestication and implementation of National Strategic Plan of Action Nutrition by the executive arm of government across the country; and poor tracking and monitoring of budgetary allocation and utilisation on nutrition by civil society groups.

15. Inadequate understanding of the existing health care programmes as well as structures and functions of the existing healthcare system in the country remains a fundamental factor that may impede effective civil society advocacy on health.


RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants recommended as follows:

1. Effective policy implementation, frequent supervision with administrative consistency to promote continuity and home grown agricultural initiatives at all levels.

2. Adequate financial literacy for farmers, especially across the grassroots to promote effective utilization, tracking and monitoring of agricultural resources.

3. Effective communication between government and the community with increased legislative oversight on the implementation of land acquisition law to avert abuses and encourage full participation, growth and development of agricultural productivity at all levels.
4. Increased focus in value chain system to boost state’s agricultural specific strength for favourable comparative advantage and enhance employment opportunity at all levels.

5. Timely release of budgetary allocation and adequate agricultural investment, incentive and enabling facilities, and baseline systemic fund evaluation, to encourage appreciable participation, especially by small scale famers in agricultural production at all levels.

6. Developing comprehensive agricultural development plan and policies for transformation into legislation to ensure administrative sustainability and consistency in agricultural interventions.

7. Encouraging long-term planning, industrialization of agricultural sector, and full compliance with international standards on agricultural production to increase agricultural production and encourage exportation in profitable quantity.

8. Pro-poor agricultural policies with special consideration for adequate river basin facilities to encourage irrigation farming and address farmer-herdsmen tussles; and creating formidable civil society groups through adequate capacity to build synergy and advocate to the government.

9. Maintaining optimal nutrition status to secure lives and healthy living, enhance mental and physical growth and effective performance.

10. Adequate consumption of required foods classes, appropriate and exclusive breastfeeding to avoid under-nutrition status at all levels.

11. Effective cognitive and educational development through maternal and child early nutrition intake; and massive community sensitization on exclusive breastfeeding and family planning.

12. Adequate training and retraining programmes for the states’ nutrition officers and adequate legislative oversight to ensure accountability and improves budgetary performance on nutrition at all levels.

13. Effective domestication and implementation of National Strategic Plan of Action Nutrition by the executive arm of government across the country; and appropriate tracking and monitoring of budgetary allocation and utilisation on nutrition by civil society groups.

14. Appropriate understanding of the existing health care programmes, structures and their functionalities by civil society groups to effectively advocate and demand accountability on health care in the country.

15. Adequate health care workers and adoption of appropriate code of conduct to mitigate low-ratio-patient ratio factor and encourage attendance at healthcare facilities.

16. Understanding various international commitments and policies on health to constructively advocate and demand accountability on the health care system in the country.
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. The forum provided opportunity for the participants to organise a state’s advocacy structure on agriculture, nutrition and health with CISLAC appointed as technical support organisation. 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.

Signed:

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