

**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 BOLTON WHITE HOTEL, ABUJA ON 16TH JUNE, 2015.**

**PREAMBLE:**

Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) organized a one day Civil Society Workshop on Legislative and Policy Advocacy on Agriculture, Nutrition and Health in Nigeria. The meeting drew about 30 participants from civil society, farmer associations and the media. The meeting featured Dr. David Olayemi, Mallam Y.Z Ya'u and Dr. Babatunde Bello as the lead presenters and other discussants. After exhaustive deliberations on various thematic issues, the following observations and recommendations were made:

1. Adequate food and optimal nutritional status are the foundation blocks for the building of healthy, secure lives, and thus form the basis for development in any nation, Nigeria is one of the 20% of countries responsible for 80% of global burden of child malnutrition.
2. In Nigeria, the prevalence of malnutrition has geographical variation as revealed in stunted and wasting ratios across North West, 53% and 20%; North East, 49% and 20%; North Central 44% and 9%; South West, 31% and 9%; South South, 31% and 7.5%; and South East, 22% and 8.6%.
3. While neonatal, malarial, pneumonia, diarrhoea, measles, HIV/AIDS, injuries are contributory causes of under-5 death; rising poverty, failure in governance, institutional weaknesses, existing socio-cultural attitudes, gender inequality, food insecurity, inadequate breast feeding, inadequate care and access to health services, inappropriate food intake, and diseases are the major drivers for malnutrition in Nigeria.
4. While food insecurity results in hunger and malnutrition, malnutrition remains the most serious consequence of food insecurity in Nigeria, backpedalling economic advancement of nations by at least 8%.

5. Absence of National Policy on Food and Nutrition and lack fund to implement existing national effort such as Nutrition Specific Plan introduced by Federal Ministry of Health.
6. In spite various innovative efforts such as the introduced programme and policies to boost agriculture, resources from the sector remain untapped.
7. Lack of curiosity to adopt and transform existing national and international programmes and policies on agriculture into law sabotages efforts at achieving timely growth and policy sustainability in the sector.
8. Inadequate monitoring and delay in approval and release of budgetary allocation to agriculture sector hamper effective implementation of programmes and policies on agriculture.
9. Inadequate empowerment for especially youth population and access to arable land to engage agricultural sector contributes largely to food insecurity in Nigeria.
10. Wide policy advocacy gap to hold legislative and executive arms of government accountable to their commitments, roles and responsibilities on agriculture in Nigeria.
11. So far, various introduced national and international programmes and policies on health have witnessed inadequate implementation resulting in poor access to healthcare facility across the country.
12. Inadequate infrastructural facilities and over-concentration of healthcare facility in urban areas at the expense of rural counterparts has hampered access to adequate health care in the grassroots.
13. Inadequate budgetary allocation to health sector, poor monitoring and lack of judicious utilisation of the existing ones has distorted accountability and effective provision and distribution of health facilities across the country.
14. The recent introduced National Health Act provides opportunity to coordinate, guide, harmonise issues and resolve challenges to health sector.

## Recommendations

1. Constructive innovative and bottom-up approach by relevant stakeholders including civil society in addressing malnutrition level in Nigeria.
2. Well-informed individuals through adequate sensitisation and awareness on nutrition and persistent advocacy for adequate nutrition level by civil society and relevant stakeholders.
3. Initiating breast feeding with one hour of child birth; and rising intake of minimum acceptable diet by mother and child.
4. Improved access to food and water supply, especially at grassroots levels to mitigate avertable cases of malnutrition, stunting, diseases.
5. Immediate adoption and domestication of the draft National Policy on Nutrition and adequate budgetary allocation to effective support and implement Nutrition Specific Plan by Federal Ministry of Health.
6. Immediate legislation of existing national and international programmes and policies on agriculture to ensure their effective implementation and sustainability.
7. Timely approval and release of budgetary allocation to agricultural sector to effectively implement policies and programmes including international commitments on agriculture.
8. Intensifying and coordinate agricultural financing through Bank of Agricultural to enhance financial support to Small and Medium Scale Agriculture; and effective implementation of farmland reform programmes to build new farming communities.
9. Continuous advocacy by civil society and relevant stakeholders for pro-poor agricultural legislation and policy through consultative and constructive engagement of the legislative and Policy Formulating arms of Government.
10. Adequate empowerment for youth population to effectively engage agricultural sector and promote food security; and encouraged land clearing system to provide accessibility to farmland.
11. Effective implementation of various national and international programmes and policies to enhance adequate access to healthcare facilities.

12. Increased priority for rural development and access to healthcare facility; and well-motivated healthcare workers in the rural areas.
13. Immediate domestication and implementation of National Health Act by all levels of governments to enhance healthcare coordination and resolves challenges in the health sectors.
14. Effective tracking and monitoring of resources allocation to health to promote transparency and accountability in the sector.
15. Persistent and evidence-based advocacy to relevant stakeholders by civil society for transparency and accountability in the health sector, using key provisions from the National Health Act.