COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF A POLICY DIALOGUE ON THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF SEVERE ACUTE MALNUTRITION AS A CHILD RIGHT ORGANISED BY CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE (CISLAC) IN COLLABORATION WITH AISHA BUHARI FOUNDATION HELD AT 3 STARS HOTEL, DUTSE JIGAWA STATE ON 21ST NOVEMBER, 2019.

Preamble

Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) in collaboration with Aisha Buhari Foundation (ABF) organized a Policy Dialogue on the prevention and treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) as a child right. The meeting aimed at bringing critical stakeholders under one roof to brainstorm exhaustively on their roles and responsibilities towards adequate and sustainable investment on nutrition, and how they can ensure SAM is recognized as a human right issue, while galvanizing fulfillment of government’s commitments to funding and prioritization of prevention and treatment of SAM through sustained support for Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) activities in the state. After deliberating exhaustively on various thematic issues, the following observations and recommendations were made:

Observations:

1. Adequate food and nutrition remains paramount to secure lives and socio-economic prosperity of a nation, hence sustained nutrition investment, policy and community-based advocacy are key to complement preventive and curative efforts to address Severe Acute Malnutrition in the state.

2. The ongoing efforts by governments at all levels towards sustained nutrition investment resonates with global commitment and directions to end hunger and combat malnutrition.

3. Delayed implementation of National Strategic Plan of Action on Nutrition (NSPAN) hampers progress in providing technical but realistic guide on nutrition intervention in the state.
4. In the 2020 Appropriations Bill the State Ministry of Agriculture has mainstreamed a dedicated budget line to activate related component in the NSPAN.

5. Jigawa state presently witnesses decreased enrolment (from 40 to 15 weekly) cases at Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM), hence, the need for the state to validate the development to understand factors that necessitated low enrolment.

6. Sustained nutrition intervention is bedeviled by inadequate budgetary allocation, delayed implementation and cash backing, inadequate human resources, poor policy domestication and implementation.

7. Adequate nutrition status constitutes an enshrined provision in the Child Right Act, presently awaiting domestication in Jigawa state.

8. The State Government has constituted a Nutrition Unit with dedicated staff in the Ministry of Health to attend to nutrition related issues in the state.

9. Federal Ministry of Health has proposed the establishment of additional CMAM centres in Jigawa state to ensure adequate coverage of intervention across the Local Government.

10. While all Local Government in the state have pledged to contribute monthly to pool of fund established by the State Government dedicated to tackle malnutrition, the initiative is presently backpedal by the recent Federal Government directive on Local Government financial autonomy.

11. The State House of Assembly has supported Masaki project, a Local Government initiative of the State Government to enhance nutrition at grassroots level.

Recommendations

Participants recommended as follows:
1. Embracing smart action towards sustained preventive and curatives measures to address SAM through the deployment of local initiatives as well as enhanced public-private sector partnership.

2. Massive public/community sensitization and awareness on appropriate personal hygiene, potable water and environmental sanitation to prevent recurring cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition in the state.

3. Sustained food demonstration at facility levels across the 27 Local Government in the state to provide practical guides on essential food preparation towards prevention of SAM.

4. Inclusive-convenience at public places to avert reported but prevalence cases of open efecations that exacerbate SAM at all levels.

5. Full implementation of existing policies and plans on nutrition to enable sustainable direction and holistic guides for nutrition intervention in the state.

6. Prompt domestication of the Child Right Act to secure child right to adequate and sustainable nutrition status in the state.

7. Aggressive public/community sensitization on existing programmes and policies on nutrition in the state to encourage continuity with targeted citizens’ orientation on governance as well as evidence-based advocacy by Civil Society groups for the domestication and full implementation of the policies.

8. Proactive effort by the Members of State House of Assembly to fulfil commitment to earmark certain percentage of constituency project allocation to nutrition intervention in the state.
9. State-inclusive data generation to provide accurate account of nutrition indices for appropriate policy action and direction in the state.

10. Strengthening oversight activities by the State House of Assembly on nutrition fund releases to ensure accountability and sustained investment and intervention.

**Action points:**

**Ministry of Health to as a matter of urgent:**

- Enhance collaboration with related CSOs
- MDAs will be provided with budgetary release to execute Masaki project
- Ensure timely budget release for nutrition intervention.

**Ministry of Water Resources to:**

- Strengthen collaboration with relevant MDAs through Quarterly Review Meeting to ensure nutrition issue is brought to the fore.
- Leverage its budgetary provision on nutrition to ensure adequate potable water provision at grassroots level.
- Assist in proper validation of nutrition data in Jigawa state.

**CSOs to:**

- Enhance policy enlightenment through courtesy visit to relevant stakeholders.
- Collaborate with ALGON through interface to discuss issues affecting nutrition funding.
- Conduct community awareness on personal hygiene and appropriate food intake through production of jingles in local language.

**Media to:**

- Raise policy consciousness on nutrition through dedicated programme on Television on NTA, where CSO, policy makers will be invited to discuss and
brainstorm on way forward. Minimum of 2 hours will be provided for the programme.

- Jigawa State Television to leverage existing programme on nutrition to set agenda for issues raised in the meeting through engagement of relevant stakeholders.
- Follow-up on budgetary allocation and releases

Ministry of Women Affairs to:

- Empower women with enabling skill acquisition for self-sufficiency and socio-economic development