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 QUARTER HOUSE HOTEL, KANO STATE ON 24TH OCTOBER, 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. While one in three (32%) of Nigerian children experiences nutrition deficit, Kano state records highest proportion of Severe Acute Malnutrition in the North West region.

2. Constructive comparative analysis of malnutrition and under-development remains paramount to understand the criticality of adequate nutrition status to the nation’s growth and development.

3. While Nigeria has hitherto recognised the importance of adequate nutrition status to the nation’s development through the adoption of various policies on nutrition, policy neglect in the implementation process remains a serious setback to fulfill government’s commitment to adequate nutrition status as a child right at all levels.
4. The existing ailing and under-funded Primary Health Care facilities across the country hamper efforts at achieving adequate and sustainable treatment and prevention of Severe Acute Malnutrition at all levels.

5. The growing dwindling financing for nutrition in the national and state’s budgetary allocation is a serious concern that if not promptly addressed may exacerbate increasing cases of SAM with resultant child mortality at all levels as presently witnessed in Kano state.

6. Delayed finalization and passage of *Kano State Child Protection Bill* (adapted from the Child Right Act) is an impediment to secure Children’s rights to adequate nutrition status and sustainable investment on nutrition in the state.

7. Existing capacity gaps on the provisions Child Right Act at policy and legislative levels delay reintroduction and passage of Child Protection Bill in the state.

8. Existence of human resource gap on nutrition and lack of proper coordination delay efforts at tackling malnutrition in Kano State.

**Recommendations:**

1. Concerted budgetary advocacy for adequate and sustained nutrition investment across all the line ministries, department and agencies to avert stock-out of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) and other preventive measures administered at Primary Health Care facilities in the state.

2. Prompt reintroduction of Kano State Child Protection Bill to the State House of Assembly by civil society groups for review and passage to provide a legal platform to secure child right to adequate and sustainable nutrition status.

3. Adequate public and community awareness and thorough supervision by Monitoring and Evaluation Committee on the dissemination and usage of
RUTF to mitigate reported cases of abuse and misuse by facilities, households and individuals.

4. Recruitment of qualified staff to efficiently administer RUTF to avert abuses at top level.

5. Ensure total conformity with UNICEF guidelines on prevention and treatment of SAM to ensure compliance to standardization in administration and logistic processes.

6. Mainstreaming training and retraining courses on nutrition at primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Kano state to bridge existing human resource base for nutrition.

7. Massive public enlightenment to drive behavioural change and appropriate individual orientation at all levels to encourage enabling specialty in nutritional sciences.

8. Timely release and judicious utilization of fund and cash-backing support to enable prompt disbursement processes across the line ministries.

9. Prompt domestication and full implementation of existing policies supporting nutrition including the State Policy on Food and Nutrition to give appropriate coordination and direction on nutrition implementation.

10. Revitalisation of Local Government Committee on Food and Nutrition to enhance supervision, administration and performance evaluation of nutrition programmes and investment.

11. Enhanced synergy among the State Executive Council, State and Local Government Nutrition Committees through periodic meeting to report, monitor and evaluate progress and impact on nutrition interventions in the state.
12. Immediate declaration of the State of Emergency on SAM to give prioritized attention to nutrition investment in the state.

Action point:

1. Ministry of Information and media to focus more on communities through behavioural change communication on nutrition
2. CSOs to hold policy makers accountable on nutrition situation in Kano state
3. CSOs to engage policy makers in promoting and prioritizing appropriate nutrition services in the state.
4. CISLAC/ABF and development partners to sustain capacity building for CSOs, MDAs and relevant Committees in the State Assembly on nutrition.
5. Media to galvanise massive reportage and sustained sensitization on nutrition activities in the state.
6. Ministry of Planning and Budget to ensure all line MDAs have budget line on nutrition with cash backing to support timely releases across the MDAs.
7. State Assembly to reintroduce Child Protection Bill for review and prompt passage.

Signed:

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