COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF A TOWN HALL MEETING ON UNDERSTANDING LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT FUNCTION ON MATERNAL HEALTH ORGANIZED BY THE CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE (CISLAC) WITH SUPPORT FROM MAC ARTHUR FOUNDATION HELD AT 3 STAR HOTEL DUTSE, JIGAWA STATE ON 5th JUNE, 2014.

PREAMBLE:

Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) organized a one day Town Hall Meeting on Understanding Legislative Oversight Function on Maternal Health with support from Mac Arthur Foundation. The meeting drew over 20 participants from Jigawa State House of Assembly, civil society and the media. The meeting featured Mallam Dalhatu Yola and Chioma Blessing Kanu as the lead presenters and other discussants. After exhaustive deliberations on various thematic issues, the following observations and recommendations were made:

OBSERVATIONS:

1. Existing level of poverty and desert encroachment in the State have posed a set back to the achievement of maternal health.
2. Inadequate public involvement and participation in the passage of Bills by Jigawa State House of Assembly.
3. Inadequate training and retraining programme for legislature and legislative staff on their roles and responsibilities towards the achievement of maternal health.
4. Inadequate public sensitization and awareness on the existing State’s legislation.
5. Absence of MDGs Committee in the Jigawa State House of Assembly; inadequate legislative oversight on maternal health; and MDGs work is spread across several committees.
6. Lack of existing work plan to fast-track rapid attainment of MDGs in the State.
7. Lack of up-to-date survey data, envisioned change in leadership, delay in release of funding has threatened maternal health in the State.
8. Unethical attitudes of some health workers toward pregnant mothers at various health facilities.
9. Overconcentration of health personnel in the urban areas at the expense of rural counterparts; lack of residential accommodation for health personnel; and poor road network in the rural areas.
10. Inadequate public awareness about the processes and procedures of petitioning to the relevant House Committee against maltreatment by facility staff.
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Poverty alleviation programmes through establishment of skill acquisition centres across the grassroots; increased accessibility to clean water and sanitation; good governance; adequate and sustainable support for Safe Motherhood Scheme.

2. Proper monitoring and evaluation through effective persistent legislative oversight on the implementation of MDGs with intensified oversight on health facilities by the House Committee on Health.

3. Constructive collaboration between the legislature and donor agencies to enhance legislative oversight capacity on maternal health.

4. Adequate training and retraining programmes for legislature and legislative staff on their roles and responsibility toward the attainment of effective maternal health.

5. Massive recruitment of medically trained personnel to strengthen existing attendance at health facilities with adequate incentive schemes to sustain health personnel presence in the rural communities; and strict compliance to professional ethics by health personnel.

6. Participatory and objective focus executive, legislature, judiciary and Non-Governmental Organisations towards successive implementation and achievement of maternal health.

7. Effective capacity building workshops, seminars to enhance working relationships among MDGs caucus in the State.

8. Massive public awareness and sensitization on the existing legislation by the media, civil society and relevant stakeholders; and adequate information dissemination, especially across the grassroots.

9. Organise a forum as a platform for the presentation of harmonized MDGs related issues in various committees in the Jigawa State House of Assembly to fortify formation of effective MDGs caucus.

10. Development of effective work plan to promote timely attainment of the MDGs; prompt effort by the Committees of Health and Women Affairs to institute research to secure up-to-date data.

11. Increased budgetary allocation to the health sector and timely release of funds by the Jigawa State Government.

12. Adequate public awareness and encouraged public petition by House Committee on Public Petition against all manners of molestations toward pregnant mothers.
CONCLUSION

The participants expressed their appreciation to CISLAC for convening the town hall meeting and to MacArthur Foundation for providing the support to this all important program channeled towards understanding legislative oversight functions with special focus on maternal and child health as well as increased knowledge amongst stakeholders. The State Government strongly supports the initiative of promoting MDGs. Participants noted that the engagement was revealing and indeed an opportunity to begin to create bigger conversation amongst MDGs caucus in Jigawa State.

Signed:

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