COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF A ONE-DAY EXECUTIVE, LEGISLATIVE, CSOs AND MEDIA DIALOGUE ON MATERNAL HEALTH ACCOUNTABILITY ORGANIZED BY CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE (CISLAC) WITH SUPPORT FROM THE MACARTHUR FOUNDATION, HELD AT CHIMCHERRY HOTEL, KADUNA STATE ON 24TH APRIL, 2018.

PREAMBLE:
Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) organized a One-day Executive, Legislative, CSOs and Media Dialogue on Maternal Health Accountability. The Dialogue aims at bringing Kaduna state’s executive, legislators, CSOs and media under one roof to brainstorm on current trend, progress, opportunities and challenges on maternal healthcare service provision and delivery in the state. The meeting drew participants representing Kaduna State House of Assembly, State Primary Health Care Development Agency, Planning and Budget Commission, Education and Civil Society Organizations, and the Media. After exhaustive deliberations on various thematic issues, the following progress, challenges and opportunities were recorded:

Progress:

1. The State Government has sustained citizens’ participation in budgetary process through regular Town Hall meeting to harmonize citizens’ perception, priority and input into a proposed Appropriation.
2. On-going effort by the State Government at upgrading Primary Health Care facilities in the state with no fewer than 77 (out of 255) fully completed to provide adequate and accessible maternal and child health services.
3. The State has in 2017 Appropriation Act allocated over 16% to the health sector.
4. The State Government has approved N480million with N100million released as co-funding arrangement to Saving One Million Lives provision of the World Bank.
5. In collaboration with Centre for Girl Child Education of Ahmadu Bello University, the State Government encourages Safe Space Initiative, a platform to address issues relating to the girl child.
6. The State Ministry of Education intensifies effort at encouraging enrolment into science classes for girl child with scholarship for 250 preparing for Medicine and Nursing including those mainstreamed under Safe Space Initiative.

Challenges:

1. Delay in domestication and implementation of Freedom of Information Act remains a challenge to budgetary information accessibility by civil society and the media.
2. Inadequate civil society involvement in budget planning process.
3. Inadequate awareness and information sharing by the Planning and Budget Commission on existing policy guiding civil society engagement with government.
4. Inadequate synergy among civil society groups hampers effort at creating formidable force demanding accountability in governance.
5. Delay in creation of Civil Society Desk Office in the State House of Assembly impedes information accessibility and constructive legislative, civil society and media relation.

6. Inadequate funding for the Ministry of Education to sustain its existing programs and activities on maternal health.

**Opportunities:**

1. Existing political-will and committed policy responsiveness to maternal health issues.
2. Kaduna Maternal Accountability Mechanism is an enabling platform for civil society groups to synergize and engage accountability in maternal and child health.
3. The existing Safe Space Initiative is an important platform to discourage potential risks of maternal and child health issues and early child marriage.

**Recommendations:**

- Increased funding for Ministry of Education to sustain existing programs and initiative, and maintaining balance in female students’ enrolment into educational institutions with their male counterparts.
- Building civil society synergy through appropriate linkage with existing structure in the state.
- Timely domestication and implementation of the Freedom of Information Act to enable appropriate information accessibility by the media and civil society groups.
- Training and retraining programmes for the media and relevant Ministries, Department and Agencies on data collection and utilisation to inform accurate and constructive budgetary tracking and reporting on issues relating to maternal and child health accountability.
- Appropriate mapping of civil society groups in the respective areas of interest with regular update for synergy.

**Signed:**

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