COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF MEDIA TRAINING FOR LEGISLATIVE REPORTERS ON MATERNAL HEALTH ORGANIZED BY THE CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE (CISLAC) WITH SUPPORT FROM MAC ARTHUR FOUNDATION HELD AT EPITOME HOTEL AND SUITES, KADUNA ON THURSDAY, 12TH DECEMBER, 2013.

PREAMBLE:

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) organized a Media Training for Legislative Reporters on Maternal Health with support from Mac Arthur Foundation. The training drew about 20 participants from various media organisations. The training featured Mr. Iliya Kure, Mallam Y.Z Ya’u and Hajia Bilikisu Yusuf as the lead presenters and Dr. Aminu Magashi and Dr. Paul Manya Dogo’s presentations were made by Chioma B. Kanu. After exhaustive deliberations on various thematic issues, the following observations and recommendations were made:

OBSERVATIONS:

1. Clear contradictory positions in the political reported achievements and the view of the media on health care in the State.
2. Lack of encouragement, support and cooperation among medical personnel and other stakeholders towards media reportage on health related matters.
3. Lack of political transparency, accountability, monitoring, proprietary interest and weak media attention towards health related issues has resulted to a setback on the achievement of effective media reportage on maternal health in the State.
4. Rising level of corruption, poorly paid journalism and lack of political commitment have posed a critical challenge to the achievement of effective media reportage and support on maternal health in the State.
5. Among the 32% doctors in Local Government Areas in the State, most have deviated from clinical duties arising from inadequate skilled and medical personnel; and poor reporting skills and knowledge in part of the media correspondence on health related matters.
6. Weak domesticated effort and approach towards the provision of maternal health care; and unfavourable working conditions have resulted to continuous migration of skillful health workers from the State to other part of world.
7. Inadequate budgetary allocation to health care sector has hindered the achievement of workable maternal health services in the State.
8. Weak oversight of the State House of Assembly towards the increment of budgetary allocation to maternal health has promoted serious decline in the monitoring framework of maternal and new born health.
9. The State’s executives are considered as major stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of effective maternal health policies.
10. Dearth of medication and Primary Health care Centres for women and children in the State is considered a threat to effort at reducing maternal mortality.
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increased focus on social media to drive health related reportage; and integration of the various media into a common platform.
2. Well-informed media reportage and investigative journalism on health related matters.
3. Aggressive demand by the media for continuous political commitment, transparency and accountability in the health sector; and developmental journalism using the provision of Freedom of Information Act.
4. Increased media and social media familiarity to budgetary advocacy and engagement on maternal health.
5. Effective media reportage, publicity and support on CSOs-Legislative related activities on maternal health as a catalyst to create well-informed society.
6. Effective oversight of the State House of Assembly towards maternal and new born issues.
7. Adequate provision of medical facilities and enhanced working conditions for medical workers in the State.
8. Judicious utilization of existing resources towards the provision of effective health care facilities in the State.
9. Integrated multi-sectorial approach towards the promotion of maternal health services in the State; and the use of social media to enhance audience support and interactive dialogue on maternal accountability.
10. Continuous demand by the media from the State's Executives for equipped Primary and Secondary health facilities to provide comprehensive medical attentions at grassroots level.

CONCLUSION:

The participants expressed their appreciation to CISLAC for embarking on the training and to Mac Arthur Foundation for providing the support to this all important program channeled towards repositioning media reportage on maternal accountability. The media demonstrated willingness to partner with CISLAC on its initiative of promoting maternal health among Non-state Actors. Participants expressed gratitude to the organizers noting that the engagement was revealing and indeed an opportunity to begin to create bigger conversation amongst players on health care in the State. It was also unanimously agreed that quality of conversation should set a new agenda for effective media reportage on Maternal Health in the State.

Signed:

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