

**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 MACARTHUR FOUNDATION HELD AT MAMBAYYA HOUSE, GWAMMAJA KANO ON FRIDAY, 20TH 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 25 participants from Kano State House of Assembly and various media organisations. The training featured Mallam Y.Z Ya'u and Dr. Aminu Magashi as the lead presenters. After exhaustive deliberations on various thematic issues, the following observations and recommendations were made:

**OBSERVATIONS:**

1. Inadequate media attention and reportage on the rising level of maternal mortality, especially in the grassroots across the State.
2. Shifted focus by the media from maternal health related matters; and inadequate concern by the media to hold various policy makers in the State accountable for effective maternal health services.
3. Inadequate knowledge on the use of advanced social media in the country coupled with required new skills and knowledge in media reportage has posed a setback to the distribution capacity of the print media, and reportage on maternal accountability.
4. Poor media reportage, intervention and awareness on socio-cultural related matters associated with maternal health services have aggravated unwarranted attitudes toward maternal accountability in the State.
5. Poor statistical data and documentation, information hoarding and restriction by the State House of Assembly, inadequate political accountability, and low media reportage on non-existence of maternal mortality database in the State.
6. While one woman out of every 29 Nigerians faces lifetime risk of death during childbirth, lack of medical attendants and poor health facilities have discouraged many women in the grassroots from seeking proper medical attention on maternal health.
7. Inadequate research on legislative oversight, budgetary allocation and resource utilization for the health sector in the State.
8. Lack of curiosity, inadequate advocacy and quest by the media on the disappearance of the proposed Free Maternal Health Bill in Kano State House of Assembly.
9. Lack of synergy between CSOs and the media; and poorly paid journalism have challenged effective reportage on maternal accountability in the State.
10. Lack of proper understanding by many members of State HA of the legislative oversight has altered effective media-legislative partnership and sufficient media reportage on maternal accountability in the State

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Increased focus on social media to promote maternal mortality related reportage; and integration of the various media into a common platform.
2. Effective use of social media as a medium of legislative-executive advocacy, awareness, public enlightenment and to drive citizenry participation on maternal health reportage in the State.
3. Training and retraining programmes for the State's legislators and media effective capacity building on their roles and responsibilities toward the State.
4. Evidence-based, research-oriented, committed and investigative journalism to promote maternal health related matters in the State.
5. Well-informed media on the use of newly emerged Information Communication and Technology (ICT) reporting tools to enhance reportage on maternal accountability, especially in the grassroots.
6. Adequate media reportage, intervention and awareness on socio-cultural related matters on maternal health in the State.
7. Adequate media reportage on non-existence of maternal mortality database in the State; and radical demand by the media from the State House of Assembly, necessary information on maternal related challenges using Freedom of Information Act (FOI).
8. Constructive collaboration and synergy among CSOs and the media on maternal accountability; and well paid legislative journalism in the State.
9. Drastic media reportage on budgetary allocation and resource utilization on health services; and aggressive public sensitization and awareness by the media on maternal accountability in the State.
10. Renowned syndicate media reportage and continuous involvement of the various key stakeholders on maternal accountability in the State.

## **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. Also, it was agreed that the event should set an agenda for the formalization and formulation of volunteerism among the legislative reporters.

**Signed:**

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