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 KATSINA MOTEL, KATSINA STATE ON THURSDAY 23RD JANUARY, 2014.

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 over 35 participants from various media organisations including the Chief Press Secretary, Katsina State House of Assembly. The training featured Mallam Y.Z Ya’u as the lead presenter and other discussants. After exhaustive deliberations on various thematic issues, the following observations and recommendations were made:

OBSERVATIONS:

1. Inadequate media reportage and agenda setting on maternal mortality and other related cases, especially in the grassroots.
2. High level of corruption, lack of political commitment towards health sector has impeded effective maternal healthcare.
3. Apart from the existing media, the advance of social media has proven useful in the making and dissemination of media reportage.
4. Continuous shift in individuals’ attention and interest from local to international media reportage; and unethical attitudes of health personnel has discouraged several women from attending maternal health services.
5. Weak social media engagement at State level has narrowed the achievement of effective reportage on maternal mortality.
6. Inadequate media commitment to hold policy makers accountable for their constitutional mandates and oversights on maternal health.
7. Inadequate skills and knowledge by the media on various declarations on health that Nigeria is signatory to.
8. Poor public awareness and sensitization on maternal health, especially in the grassroots.
9. Poor funding, under-utilization of the existing resources and inappropriate political policies toward the health sector.
10. Weak media reportage and supervision on budgetary allocation and implementation in the health sector.
11. Poor media surveillance on the existing medical facilities in the State.

RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Effective political commitment and intensified legislative oversight towards health sector in the State.
2. Objective focused and de-normalised media reportage to influence advocacy and participation on maternal health across the grassroots.
3. Well-informed and evidence-based media to generate factual data and reportage on maternal health in the State.
4. Effective use of socio-media as a tool to enhance media reportage, audience interactivity and accessibility, and feedback on maternal health.
5. Investigative journalism, qualitative, informative and educative, reportage to drive individual attention towards local media reportage.
7. Persistent and expanded media coverage and reportage on maternal health; and increased in political oversights on proper codes of conduct by medical personnel in the State.
8. Massive and sustainable public awareness and sensitization to drive individual positive orientation maternal health across the grassroots with significant consideration for religion and traditional leaders.
9. Effective and judicious utilization of the existing local resources to cater for sufficient maternal healthcare service in the State.
10. Increased in media curiosity towards reportage and supervision on budgetary allocation and implementation in the health sector.
11. Effective utilisation of the existing data sources to validate media reportage on maternal health; and increase surveillance by reporters on the existing health facilities 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 healthcare in the State. It was also unanimously agreed that the media professionals present set a new agenda and form a Forum for effective media reportage on Maternal Health/Accountability in the State.

Signed
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