COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF AN EXECUTIVE, LEGISLATIVE, CSOs AND MEDIA ROUNDTABLE ON FINANCING FOR NUTRITION IN KANO STATE ORGANIZED BY CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE (CISLAC) IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN’S FUND (UNICEF) HELD AT GRAND CENTRAL HOTEL, KANO STATE ON 25TH SEPTEMBER, 2018.

Preamble

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre in partnership with United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) organized a Roundtable Dialogue. The Dialogue aimed at bringing under one roof the state’s executive, legislative, CSOs and the media to identify opportunities for financing nutrition, understand existing efforts by the State towards increasing domestic investment for nutrition investment and addressing nutrition emergency, giving cognizance to the importance of timely release of funds for nutrition, increased domestic investment for the scale-up of CMAM, and increased budget line for nutrition in Kano state. The meeting drew participants from the State House of Assembly, State Ministries of Health, Budget and Economic Planning, civil society groups, development partner and the media.

Observations

1. Malnutrition constitutes a serious setback to socio-economic development of a nation, and sustainable growth in Northern Nigeria cannot be achieved without prioritised attention to scale-up and sustain investment for nutrition.

2. While underlying causes of malnutrition include: food insecurity, socio-economic deprivation, improper feeding, inappropriate caregiving resources, poor access to health services, safe and hygienic environment; the basic causes of malnutrition are: inadequate knowledge and financial resources, politics and governance, lack of political will as well as other socio-economic and environmental challenges.

3. Apart from the challenges associating with poor domestication of policy, weak nutrition governance, non-implementation of strategic plan of action, inadequate technical human resource and low coverage of proven intervention, Kano state records the highest number of stunted children with 1.4 million in the North.

4. In Kano state, Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) programme has been scale-up from Six (6) to Thirteen (13) LGAs (out of 44 LGAs) which has been most devastating among children under-five and pregnant mothers with propensity by the State Government to scale-up the interventions.
5. As part of policy interventions to address malnutrition, Kano State Government in recent times has formulated strategies for policy monitoring and evaluation of all nutrition activities; identified nutrition challenges in the course of discharging programme activities; and strengthened coordination of nutrition programme among various partners in the state.

6. While the Ministry of Planning and Budget prepares the budget, the State Ministry of Finance, particularly Treasury has the sole mandate for release of nutrition funds.

7. The State Government has established a High Level Committee on Food and Nutrition chaired by the Secretary to the State Government with specific mandate to galvanise and strengthen nutrition awareness across the grassroots.

8. The state’s CMAM facilities experience persistent stock of RUTF emanating from delay in the release of funding for the procurement of RUTF.

Recommendations

Participants recommend as follows:

1. Instituting appropriate nutrition governance and accountability structure in the state to enhance accountability for nutrition interventions.

2. Intensifying policy advocacy to the State Governor on the need to set a timeline for the release of nutrition funding in the state.

3. Presentation of technical guideline or blueprint by UNICEF for domestication to guide the civil society and media policy advocacy for the creation of the state’s accountability structure on nutrition.

4. Community-based advocacy and sensitization by the CSOs and media on the importance of maintaining adequate nutrition status.

5. Strengthening oversight activities by the State House of Assembly on the existing allocation for nutrition; and introducing a legislation to sustain timely release of funding for nutrition in the state.

6. Effective implementation of strategic plan of action to adequately address multi-sectoral malnutrition in the state.

7. Enhanced legislative oversight on the provision and distribution of RUTF to address persistent stock-out at CMAM.
8. Persistent information provision and adequate training/retraining programmes for the media to encourage targeted investigative journalism on nutrition.

**Action points:**

- The State House of Assembly to liaise with the civil society group to galvanise the creation of governance and accountability structure on nutrition.
- The State House of Assembly to increase budgetary allocation and strengthen oversight activities on release of nutrition funding.
- The civil society group to intensify policy and legislative advocacy on increased budgetary allocation (at least 15%) as enshrined in the Abuja Declaration.
- Media to adopt holist approach through agenda setting to unveiling challenges bedeviling adequate and timely release of funding for nutrition.

**Post-intervention impacts/succesess: Kano state**

As part of policy interventions to address malnutrition, Kano State Government in recent times has formulated strategies for policy monitoring and evaluation of all nutrition activities; identified nutrition challenges in the course of discharging programme activities; and strengthened coordination of nutrition programme among various partners in the state.

As suggested during the roundtable dialogue held in the state for the executive, legislative, CSOs and the media, at policy level, the state is presently working to institute appropriate nutrition governance and accountability structure to enhance accountability for nutrition interventions. The state government in collaboration with the trained civil society groups are working towards the creation of a Nutrition Unit to be domiciled in the State Ministry of Health. The Unit will be staffed with representatives from the line Ministries, Department and Agencies. This would be complemented by the critical consideration and presentation of technical guideline or blueprint by UNICEF for domestication.

In 2019 Appropriation, the state has allocated at least 15.28% of its total budget to health, as enshrined in the Abuja Declaration. This will enhance the state’s nutrition funding and capacity to finance existing co-funding agreement with UNICEF.

Through joint advocacy effort, the trained civil society group are presently intensifying policy advocacy to the State Governor on the need to set a timeline for the release of nutrition funding in the state. With a new commitment by the State House of Assembly on the existing allocation for nutrition, the legislature is working to mainstream nutrition investment as part of the 2019 oversight activities across relevant MDAs. The legislature also works to enhance oversight on the provision and distribution of RUTF to address persistent stock-out at CMAM.

Various media that have benefitted from CISLAC-UNICEF rigorous and retraining programmes are presently engaging regular awareness and targeted reportage on nutrition through agenda setting to unveiling challenges bedevilling adequate and timely release of funding for nutrition.