COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF AN EXECUTIVE, LEGISLATIVE, CSOS AND MEDIA ROUNDTABLE ON FINANCING FOR NUTRITION IN BAUCHI STATE

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF AN EXECUTIVE, LEGISLATIVE, CSOs AND MEDIA ROUNDTABLE ON FINANCING FOR NUTRITION IN BAUCHI STATE ORGANIZED BY CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE (CISLAC) IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN’S FUND (UNICEF) HELD AT DESTINATION BAUCHI HOTEL, BAUCHI STATE ON 11TH OCTOBER, 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 and address 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 Bauchi state. The meeting drew participants from the State House of Assembly, State Ministries of Health, Finance, Agriculture, Women Affairs, State Planning Commission, civil society groups, development partners and 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 prioritized attention to scale-up and sustain investment for nutrition.

2. Funding for nutrition cannot be left in the hands of Development Partners alone, to successfully address malnutrition in the state, the state government needs to take ownership of nutrition funding.

3. As part of policy interventions to address malnutrition, Bauchi State Government in Partnership with UNICEF has developed a Food and Nutrition Policy for implementation in the state, due to be finalized by the end of the year, 2018.
4. The Percentage of stunted children under 5 in Bauchi state have reduced from 54.4% in 2013 to 35.7% in 2016.

5. While the state Planning Commission in collaboration with relevant MDAs prepares the budget, the State Ministry of Finance, particularly Treasury has the sole mandate for release of nutrition funds, while commissioners and permanent secretaries are responsible for follow up actions.

6. Apart from the challenge of funding, insufficient CMAM Centres, and lack of extension workers, there is also the challenge of complete lack of information and knowledge regarding the use of RUTF and malnutrition preventive measures in the state, owing to lack of mobilization, sensitization and awareness creation.

7. The government would be more willing to fund nutrition in the state if development partners are able to show in actual data achieved results from their interventions in the area of nutrition in the state.

8. Out of the 21,457 children admitted into CMAM program in 2017 in Bauchi state, 94% were cured, while 3.8% death rate was registered.

**Recommendations**

Participants recommend as follows:

1. Intensifying policy advocacy to the Governor on the need for prompt release of nutrition funding in the state.

2. 9% of Bauchi indigenes have access to radio and other media channels, the media should therefore, be proactive in sensitizing, informing and creating awareness on the importance of maintaining adequate nutrition status.

3. Enhanced synergy between stakeholders, the government, CSOs, Media, Civil and Religious Leaders to amplify voices, to create awareness and educate the populace on malnutrition and push for improvement in nutrition funding in the state.

4. Mobilization and awareness creation on the use of RUTF should be carried out through PHC centers as they are closer to the people.

5. Explore and source local alternatives to RUTF to address the funding gap and inconsistency of availability.

**Action points:**
• The civil society group to intensify advocacy to increase budgetary allocation and timely release of funds for nutrition in the state.

• Media to adopt holistic approach through agenda setting to unveiling challenges bedeviling adequate and timely release of funding for nutrition.

• To ensure a more amplified voice on nutrition funding in the state, the MDAs working on nutrition would work in synergy with CSOs working on nutrition in the state to push for nutrition funding by creating inroads for advocacy to the government and sharing of information with CSOs that would be useful for engaging stakeholders.

• The Bauchi state House of Assembly through relevant legislative committees should facilitate budget(s) passage; ensure the release and its effective utilization.

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