

# COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF AN EXECUTIVE, LEGISLATIVE, CSOs AND MEDIA ROUNDTABLE ON FINANCING FOR NUTRITION IN NIGER STATE

**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF AN EXECUTIVE, LEGISLATIVE, CSOs AND MEDIA ROUNDTABLE ON FINANCING FOR NUTRITION IN NIGER STATE ORGANIZED BY CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE (CISLAC) IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF) HELD AT DOKKO HOTEL MINNA, NIGER STATE ON 28<sup>TH</sup> 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 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 Niger state. The meeting drew participants from the State Ministry of Education, State Ministry of Agriculture, Niger State Ministry of Planning, civil society groups 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 prioritized 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, inadequate political will as well as other socio-economic and environmental challenges.
3. Niger State is not ranked among the states with the highest malnutrition prevalence in Nigeria however, figures show that stunting and wasting are on the increase resulting from malnutrition,
4. In view of UNICEF's adoption of Niger state into its nutrition programme, the onus is on the state government to respond by matching counterpart funding on nutrition to ensure effectiveness and sustainability of the programme.

4. Three Referral centers exist in Primary Healthcare Centers (PHC) in Niger state but do not operate to adequately cater for acute malnutrition management in the state
5. The practice of embedding nutrition allocations under lump-sums in Niger State budgeting processes makes it difficult to track actual nutrition allocations and releases.
7. Civil Society engagements on budgetary processes in Niger state is low resulting to poor level of information on government's actual efforts on nutrition.
8. Some Donor agencies do not adequately involve CSOs during conceptualization stages of projects to enable CSOs stay abreast of such projects and available funds for government.

### **Recommendations**

Participants recommend as follows:

1. Institutionalize 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 for prompt release of nutrition funding in the state.
3. There is an urgent need for Niger State government to arrest the rising situation of stunting and wasting in the state through a holistic malnutrition management approach
4. 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.
5. The state government should as a matter of urgency increase the number of CMAM centres in the state.

6. Community-based advocacy and sensitization by the CSOs and media on the importance of maintaining adequate nutrition status.
7. Nutrition should be clearly itemized in the budget to ensure accountability in the disbursements and utilization of funds
8. There should be increased CSOs participation in budgetary process to ensure nutrition agenda are duly captured in the state's fiscal plans while also tracking actual releases and implementations.
9. Advocacy for improved nutrition should be in line with the Abuja Declaration which demands for 15% of total budget to nutrition.
10. Create a Technical Working Group on nutrition to drive effective implementation of strategic plan of action to adequately address multi-sectoral approach to tackling malnutrition in the state.
11. CSOs in Niger state should improve their knowledge of Nutrition through training and research in order to improve their capacity for informed engagement with government.
12. Advocacy for improved budgeting on nutrition in Niger State should adopt a collective strategy involving all relevant stakeholders.

**Action points:**

- The State House of Assembly to liaise with the civil society group to galvanize the creation of governance and accountability structure on nutrition.
- The State House of Assembly to facilitate increase in 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%) to health sector as enshrined in the Abuja Declaration.
- Media to adopt holistic approach through agenda setting to unveil challenges bedeviling adequate and timely release of funding for nutrition.

Signed

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