COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF A ONE-DAY LEGISLATIVE AND MEDIA DIALOGUE ON MATERNAL HEALTH ORGANIZED BY CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE (CISLAC) WITH SUPPORT FROM THE MACARTHUR FOUNDATION, HELD AT MAKERA HOTEL, KATSINA STATE ON 8TH JUNE, 2017.

PREAMBLE:
Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) organized a One-day Legislative and Media Dialogue on Maternal Health. The Dialogue aimed at bringing Katsina State’s legislature and the media under one roof to brainstorm on necessary legislative action to address current maternal health funding challenges in the state for effective, efficient and affordable maternal and child healthcare delivery in the state. The meeting drew over 20 participants representing State House of Assembly and the Media. After exhaustive deliberations on various thematic issues, the following observations and recommendations were made:

Observations:

1. The Jigawa State House of Assembly has fully mainstreamed the state’s Civil Society Group participation in legislative processes.
2. The State House of Assembly has embarked on persistent community outreach as monitoring and evaluation process to harmonise feedback on communities’ perspectives on the implementation of legislation.
3. The State House of Assembly exhibits and encourages political accountability and transparency through involvement of stakeholders’ participation and contribution including the civil society groups in legislative process.
4. Inadequate infrastructural facilities remain impeding challenge to maternal healthcare accessibility, especially across grassroots in the state.
5. Apart from frequent complications from pregnancy and childbirth, other reasons for the high maternal mortality in the State include low Anti-natal care coverage which stands at 20.1%; low professional and facility based delivery rates which stands at 5.1% and 4.5% respectively; and low modern contraceptive prevalence rate standing at 0.2%.
6. Capacity gaps among the Legislative and Executive arms in appropriation process and development of memo to access budgetary allocation delay release of the allocation for timely maternal and child health interventions.
7. While the State records high rate of severely acute malnourished children, the State House of Assembly has set up a committee to devise innovative approach to mitigate the malnutrition challenges in the presence dwindling donors’ resources.
8. The State Assembly had increased budgetary allocation to nutrition from N270million to N300million in the 2017 Appropriation Act.

Recommendations:
1. Strengthen the State Government and Local Governments working relationship to promote accessibility to maternal healthcare facilities and services, especially in the grassroots.

2. Establishing an enabling platform for health sector program managers and State House of Assembly Committees on Health and Appropriation to critically look at the health budget and proffer either to increase or make changes on priorities health needs.

3. Creative and innovative media to support maternal and child health investigative journalism and documentaries on case studies as an advocacy tool in decision making.

4. Re-creating Civil Society Liaison Unit of the State House of Assembly to foster smooth participation of Civil Society engagement and encourage accountability platform.

5. Creating a legislative budget and research Department in the State House of Assembly to be coordinated by legislative experts on budgetary processes as a feedback mechanism to harmonise citizens’ inputs to inform legislative decision in Appropriation process.

6. Strengthen capacity in memo development and presentation to access maternal health budgetary allocation.

**Call to immediate action:**

- State House of Assembly to ensure adequate funds are allocated to health sector.
- State House of Assembly to track the Ministry of Health budget through adequate oversight activities to ensure funds are judiciously utilized.
- To bridge capacity gaps in the legislature and media.
- State House of Assembly to re-create a CSOs Liaison Office to enhance legislative-CSOs working relation.
- State House of Assembly to create a Budget and Research Office in Assembly.
- The media to design and air programmes, drama, jingles to raise policy and public awareness and consciousness on maternal and child health.
- Media to strengthen collaboration with legislature and civil society to promote effective implementation of budgetary allocation to maternal and child health.
- Media to set agenda for maternal health issues through free-airtime programmes.

**Signed:**

1. **Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani)**
   Executive Director, CISLAC

2. **Hon. Musa Sule Dutse**
   Chairman Appropriation Committee, Jigawa State House of Assembly

3. **Tijani Zakari**
   Secretary, Committee on Education
4.  Anas Abdullahi
    Radio Jigawa