CS-SUNN URGES OYO STATE GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT STATE STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION FOR NUTRITION

The Civil Society-Scaling Up Nutrition in Nigeria, (CS-SUNN) has called on the Oyo State Government to scale up nutrition specific and sensitive interventions in the State, by fully implementing the Oyo State Strategic Plan of Action for Nutrition and creating specific nutrition budget lines across all nutrition line Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in the state.

According to the National Demographic and Health Survey (2018), 34.5 percent of under-five children in the state are stunted, 3.8 percent are wasted with 19.1 percent being underweight. CS-SUNN, at a Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Pooled Fund Advocacy Brief Dissemination meeting held recently in Oyo state, emphasized that improved investments in nutrition and timely releases of funds for nutrition specific and sensitive interventions by the state government, are key to reversing the above negative nutritional status. The coalition further revealed that with improved nutrition investments in the state, proportion of persons who suffer from hunger will be reduced by 50%, Exclusive Breastfeeding rate will be increased by 50%, stunting among children under five will be reduced by 50% and Vitamin A Supplementation will be increased by 50%, come 2025, in line with the targets set in the National Policy on Food and Nutrition.

CS-SUNN, acknowledges the commitments of the Oyo State government towards advancing nutrition in the state - the existence of a functional State Committee on Food and Nutrition (SCFN) and the creation of a separate nutrition budget line in some MDAs among others. However, more needs to be done to improve nutrition outcomes for the state. The extension of paid maternity leave to 24 weeks from its current 16 weeks to enable working mothers exclusively breastfeed their children and strengthening the SCFN for effective coordination of nutrition interventions in the state, are steps in the right direction towards advancing nutrition in Oyo state.

The Alliance throws her weight behind the State Nutrition Officer, Oladeji Omolara Atinuke who had stated during the CS-SUNN’s Pooled Fund Dissemination meeting that all hands must be on deck to address the scourge of malnutrition and expects her continuous support to improve nutrition in Oyo state. In her words “Nutrition is everybody’s responsibility and not just government’s alone”. CS-SUNN is optimistic that the state Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Inclusion will continue to support the nutrition agenda in the state especially in the area of advocacies to the Wife of the State Governor, Her Excellency Tamunominini Oluwayesì Makinde and other policy makers and influencers to advance nutrition for the benefit of women of childbearing age and children under-five.

In a related development, Representative of the Permanent Secretary, State Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Adediran Ademola at the end of a one-day CS-SUNN SUN Pooled Fund Project Stakeholders Meeting on Improving Nutrition and Way Forward in the state, observed that the menace caused by malnutrition has become a global burden. He said that every ten seconds, a child dies in Nigeria. The Alliance laments (as revealed by the State Nutrition Officer, Mrs. Oladeji Atinuke) that the state is yet to hold any of the two biannual Maternal and Newborn Child Health Weeks (MNCHW) and did not participate in the 2019 World Breastfeeding Week due to lack of funding. CS-SUNN tasks the Honourable Commissioner for Health, Dr. Bello B.V.A to step up interventions around EBF, complementary feeding and to adopt Strategic Behavioral Change Communication approaches that will deter cultural norms that negatively impact the adequate IYCF practices in the state.
The Coalition agrees with the comments from the representative of the Nutrition Society of Nigeria, Dr. O. Ariyo, that "malnutrition reduces mental capacity and that forcing a malnourished child to compete with a well-nourished counterpart in school is a form of child abuse". CS-SUNN therefore calls for the uptake of less expensive, highly effective and efficient preventive measures alongside curative measures towards addressing malnutrition in the state.

Signed,

Beatrice Eluaka
Executive Secretary - CS-SUNN

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