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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CS-SUNN tasks Kaduna State Government on Improved Nutrition Policy Implementation and Nutrition funding

Distinguished Members of the Press,

You are welcome to this media engagement intended to highlight the nutrition situation in Kaduna State and government efforts in addressing the malnutrition menace as well as calling for improved funding and implementation of nutrition policies in the State.

The Civil Society-Scaling Up Nutrition in Nigeria (CS-SUNN) lauds the Governor Nasir El-Rufai-led administration’s resolve to tackle malnutrition headlong in the state. We commend the state government for earmarking over N980 million for nutrition in the 2017 budget.

We recognize also that the Kaduna State Emergency Nutrition Action Plan (KADENAP), chaired by the Wife of the governor, Hajiya Ummi El-Rufai is focused on operationalizing concrete actions towards reversing the disturbing statistics on malnutrition in Kaduna. More so, data from CS-SUNN’s scorecard in 2016 showed that Kaduna state achieved 63% in the implementation of the National Strategic Plan of Action for Nutrition (NSPAN), a 37.5% improvement from implementation percent recorded in 2015.

However, available statistics indicate a rising trend in the state’s malnutrition burden, which continues to be a key contributor to infant and maternal mortality and morbidity, poor cognitive development and increased severity of diseases adversely affecting under-5 children in the state. The 2015 National Nutrition and Health Survey (NNHS) reported a stunting rate in Kaduna State of 52.1% while underweight and wasting rates were 26.9% and 8.3% respectively. While the latest Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey (MICS 2017) shows a decrease in the rate of stunting which was put at 40%, wasting and underweight rates for the state have increased with underweight at 34% and wasting at 11.7% which is above the WHO acceptable level and calls for emergency action. Wasting or acute malnutrition is a condition whereby a child is too thin for his or her height due to long-term or current undernutrition or illness.

Stunting in children under five, a condition of physical and intellectual impairment that has lasting negative effects, is defined by low height for age. Simply put, stunting is a condition in
which the child is too short for his or her age with accompanying poor brain development and is a result of long-term undernutrition. Globally, stunting is currently an indicator for measuring a country’s development and it is a fact that malnutrition impedes economic development and hence the need for urgent action to address the problem. CS-SUNN is therefore, urging all relevant stakeholders led by Government to make a deliberate effort to curb malnutrition in Kaduna State.

CS-SUNN calls on the state government to finalize the state specific National Multi-sectorial Plan of Action for Nutrition and improve implementation of existing nutrition plans. We also urge the government to increase funding allocation for nutrition while ensuring timely releases, effective and efficient utilization of nutrition funds. The government needs to ensure clarity in budgeting for nutrition to include preventive interventions such as promoting optimal infant and young child feeding, staple food fortification and Maternal nutrition programmes.

CS-SUNN tasks the state government on extension of maternity leave to 6 months as is in some other states in Nigeria. The extension will contribute to improved uptake of preventive measures like Exclusive Breastfeeding, promotion of nutrition education to ensure appropriate Infant and Young Child Feeding practices and Dietary Diversification among women, especially in rural areas. Some of these measures will prevent more children from becoming malnourished and ensure that cured malnourished children do not relapse upon discharge from the treatment centres, as is currently the case in many communities.

We urge the media to step up reportage of nutrition issues to attract policy makers and concerned stakeholders to take the right steps towards curbing malnutrition in Nigeria, particularly in Kaduna State.

The Civil Society-Scaling Up Nutrition in Nigeria (CS-SUNN) is a non-governmental, non-profit making coalition of organizations with a shared vision to transform Nigeria into a country where every citizen has food and is nutrition secured. CS-SUNN is currently implementing a project, the Partnership for Improving Nigeria Nutrition Systems (PINNS) which is aimed at strengthening the Nigeria nutrition systems to make them more Result-driven, Effective, Serviceable, Efficient and Transparent (RESET) in delivering on their mandate. We focus on strengthening governance, policy implementation, effective coordination, financing, building the capacity of state actors, generation and effective communication of evidence and promoting accountability.

On this note, I welcome you all again to CS-SUNN’s Media Engagement.

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Beatrice Eluaka

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