CS-SUNN lauds Kano Government, calls for improved Nutrition Policy implementation and funding in state.

Distinguished Members of the Press,

I gladly welcome you to this media engagement aimed at highlighting the nutrition situation in Kano State and government efforts in addressing the malnutrition menace as well as calling for improved nutrition policy implementation and funding on the agenda of the Kano state government.

The Civil Society-Scaling Up Nutrition in Nigeria (CS-SUNN) recognizes that the Kano state government is committed to addressing the plight of malnourished children and lauds the responsiveness of the government to the worrisome challenge of malnutrition in the state. We commend the state government for releasing N294 million in 2017 as counter-part fund for the purchase of Ready-to-Use-Therapeutic-Food for the management and treatment of severely malnourished children in the state.

CS-SUNN also commends the Emir of Kano, HRH Alhaji Muhammadu Sanusi II, who has constantly demonstrated rare commitment towards addressing the burden of malnutrition in Nigeria, particularly in Kano state.

In spite of these efforts however, available statistics indicate an alarming 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 2014 Nigerian National Health Survey (NNHS) reported a stunting rate in Kano State of 53.4% while underweight and wasting rates were 37.7% and 13.5% respectively. It is particularly worrisome to note that the latest Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey (MICS 2017) shows an alarming increase in stunting and underweight rates for the state. Data from the MICS 2017 puts the stunting rate at 58.0%, underweight at 40.3% with a reduced wasting rate of 10.8% which is still 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 as a result of long-term or current undernutrition or illness.

Globally, stunting (a condition in which the child is too short for his or her age with accompanying poor brain development and a result of long-term undernutrition), is currently an indicator for measuring a country’s development and it is an established fact that if not checked, malnutrition impedes economic development. As Nigeria’s Centre of commerce and the investment hub of Northern Nigeria, CS-SUNN is urging all relevant stakeholders led by Government to make deliberate effort to curb the malnutrition menace in Kano State.

CS-SUNN calls on the state government to improve on uptake of preventive measures like Exclusive Breastfeeding, Appropriate Infant and Young Child Feeding practices and Dietary Diversification. This is to prevent more children becoming malnourished and to ensure that cured malnourished children do not relapse upon discharge from the treatment centres, as is currently the case in many communities. CS-SUNN further calls for increased funding allocation for nutrition, timely releases as well as transparency and judicious utilization of funds allocated for nutrition in the state.

On salience of nutrition in Kano State, we task 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 Kano State. We would on our part, continue to equip members of the press with useful and relevant information that would help and enable them step up thorough and factual reportage of Nutrition.

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. We look forward to the most successful engagement with members of the press.

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Beatrice Eluaka

*Executive Secretary (CS-SUNN)*