

**A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF A TWO-DAY MEETING ON IMPROVED NUTRITION INVESTMENT IN THE 2020 STATE ANNUAL BUDGETS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS OF NUTRITION LINE MINISTRIES FROM THE STATES OF KADUNA, NASARAWA AND NIGER AT CORINTHIA VILLA HOTEL, GARKI II, ABUJA FROM 4<sup>TH</sup> TO 5<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2019.**

***PREAMBLE***

The relationship between nutrition, health and learning is undeniably strong: nutrition is one of the three major factors (including genes and the environment) that impact a child's development. Research studies show that good nutrition in a child's early years is linked to their health and academic performance in later years. Without proper nutrition, a child's ability to fight infections is compromised as malnutrition and infections potentiate each other in a vicious cycle especially in children and women. Therefore, all stakeholders need to invest in nutrition activities in order to break this cycle and better the lots of children and women.

It is in light of this that the *Civil Society Scaling Up Nutrition in Nigeria (CS-SUNN)* in collaboration with *Alive & Thrive along with Save the Children International* who collectively have been supporting and advocating for increased investment on nutrition programmes across various states in Nigeria organized a two-day pre-2020 budget meeting on 'Improved Nutrition Investment' in the states. The meeting had participants drawn from the three focal states of *Kaduna, Nasarawa and Niger* which comprised Chairmen & Members of the House Committees on Health, Finance & Appropriation, Permanent Secretaries, state Accountant Generals, the relevant Directors of the key line Ministries of Finance, Budget & Planning, Health and Agriculture as well as State Nutrition Officers & staff of the hosting organizations (see annexure 1 for a complete list of participants).

***OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING:***

The specific objectives of the meeting were to:

1. Promote understanding of current nutrition situation and the dire need for prompt action;
2. Ascertain the level of nutrition investment and performance in the states

3. Secure commitments of the states towards domestic investment in high impact, low-cost interventions as captured in the state specific plans of actions in the 2020 annual budget.

**KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING:**

- Good will messages from Partners & State Actors of the three focal states
- Presentation of a Documentary on EBF termed; Changing the Nigerian Story
- Review of the 2018 Budget Meeting Commitments by focal states, - “*what we achieved or failed to achieve*”
- An assessment of the nutritional situation in the focal states
- Overview of the budget performance and the year 2020 Nutrition Sector Budget Proposal by the focal states
- Adequacy of the ‘*Nutrition Investment*’ when compared to the ‘*Burden of Malnutrition*’ in the focal states
- Overview of the state Specific Multi-Sectoral Plans of Action for Nutrition in focal states
- Domestic Resource Mobilization for funding state Specific Multi-Sectoral Plans of Action for nutrition by focal states
- Experience sharing and discussions

**SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS**

Following various observations made, the participants at the meeting hereby make the following recommendations and commitments:

S/N	Observation	Recommendations/ Commitments
1.	Budgetary allocations to the three states of Kaduna, Nasarawa and Niger in the 2019 and 2020 budgets for nutrition activities have increased substantially but challenges on release and cash backing are still being experienced	*Beyond increased budgets for nutrition activities, there is need to match this with timely release and cash backings. States need to find proactive ways (like use of pressure groups) to follow up memos for improved releases *Advocate for <b>quarterly</b> releases of funds to carry out nutrition activities in the states
2.	Planning and budgeting for health and nutrition programmes in these states do not fully align with the state nutrition plan and coverage data on key nutrition interventions.	*States’ plans and activities should be based on the state multi-sectoral plan on nutrition and on evidence including ensuring budget realism in annual sector budgets at the state and LGA levels

S/N	Observation	Recommendations/ Commitments
		*Tracking of key nutrition indicators should inform programme planning strategic decision making
3.	Key policy and decision-makers at the legislative and executive levels are not fully carried along in the planning, budgeting and implementation of health and nutrition programmes in the states	Continuous advocacy and engagement of the executives and legislators is paramount to securing their buy-in and improved budget allocation and appropriation for nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive activities in the three states.
4.	Delay in preparation and submission of activity request memos for planned Health and Nutrition activities across relevant MDAs contributes to delay in programme implementation and poor budgetary performance.	Timely generation and submission of activity memos by officers and implementers of nutrition specific and sensitive programmes will reduce the delays
5.	Absence of trained Nutritionists in some states is an impediment to effective implementation and scale-up of nutrition specific interventions especially at the PHC level	States to recruit, and deploy trained nutritionists to PHCs. Existing nutritionists should also be re-trained for optimal performance
6.	Nutrition intervention packages in state's contributory healthcare insurance schemes do not fully or adequately incorporate all the components required	*Increase advocacy for improved nutrition intervention package in states' contributory healthcare schemes by CSOs *There is also need to expand nutrition services specifically IYCF and CMAM to more communities for improved coverages
7.	Average budgetary performance of Nutrition sector budget across the states	States should prioritize tracking of programme implementation and funding for improved accountability and improved performance
8.	Poor utilization of budgetary releases in some cases is the major challenge to the success of nutrition activities in most states	Committees of the State Assemblies that oversee nutrition line Ministries should intensify efforts in their oversight functions by ensuring strict implementation of approved budgets for nutritional activities.
9.	Information obtained from state around nutrition funds' investments are debatable. This might be due to	Data collection/ sourcing should be done through the states' central planning agencies and all efforts should be made by all

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Observation</b>	<b>Recommendations/ Commitments</b>
	collecting such information from other sources other than the responsible MDAs	stakeholders to obtain correct nutrition budget information in order to have actual spending accurately documented and reported.
10.	Funds for empowerment activities are not targeted at addressing nutrition issues alone	Funds for empowerment should be specifically targeted at taking preventive and curative measures to address malnutrition
11.	The current state SPAN is heavily health focused with minimal and inadequate input from other sectors	Focus should be placed on promoting multi-sector strategy to provide a platform for holistic delivery of nutrition specific and sensitive interventions in all states.
12.	Lack of budgetary line and allocation for nutrition activities in the LGA budgets	States should collaborate with LGAs towards ensuring that budgetary lines are created in the respective LGA budgets

### ***CONCLUSION***

As we conclude this meeting let us remind ourselves that Nutrition and its related consequences must be viewed as a developmental issue and all hands must be on deck and be proactive to collectively address the issue.

### **Communique Committee:**

1. Hon. Aliyu Dogara Mohammed – Chairman
2. Dr. Ibrahim Adamu Alhassan
3. Pharm. Ndanusa B Usman
4. Mr. Abdullahi Yahuza
5. Mr. Awwal Waziri
6. Mr. Suleiman Idris
7. Mr. Phillip Yatai
8. Dr. Zainab Kwaru M.
9. Mrs. Phoebe Sukai Yayi
10. Dr. Stephen I. Sasetu – Secretary