

# REPORT OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN

## IN POWER CONFERENCE ON NUTRITION HELD AT TRANSCORP HILTON HOTEL ABUJA



NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM



NIGERIA GOVERNORS' WIVES FORUM



ACTION AGAINST HUNGER



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17TH MAY, 2023

CIVIL SOCIETY-SCALING UP NUTRITION IN NIGERIA

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# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>A&amp;T</b>	Alive and Thrive
<b>ANC</b>	Ante-natal Care
<b>ANRIN</b>	Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>BCC</b>	Behavioural Change Communication
<b>BMS</b>	Breast Milk Substitute
<b>BOT</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>CASCADE</b>	Community Safety Action for Supporting Climate Adaptation
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CEO,</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>CSOS</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>CS-SUNN</b>	Civil Society – Scaling Up Nutrition in Nigeria
<b>EBF</b>	Exclusive Breastfeeding
<b>EU,</b>	European Union
<b>FBOS</b>	Faith-Based Organizations
<b>FMARD</b>	Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
<b>FMFBNP</b>	Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning
<b>FMOH</b>	Federal Ministry of Health
<b>FMWA</b>	Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs
<b>FMWR</b>	Federal Ministry of Water Resources
<b>GAIN</b>	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GCFR</b>	Grand Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GON</b>	Government of Nigeria
<b>HPN</b>	Health, Population and Nutrition
<b>IGA</b>	Income Generating Activities
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>IPS</b>	Implementing Partners
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Area
<b>MDAS</b>	Ministry Department and Agencies
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goal
<b>MNCH+N</b>	Maternal New-born and Child Health + Nutrition
<b>N/SMPFAN</b>	National/State Multisectoral Plan of Action for Food and Nutrition
<b>NAFDAC</b>	National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control
<b>NCWD</b>	National Council of Women Development
<b>NDHS</b>	National Demographic Health Survey
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan
<b>NGF</b>	Nigeria Governors' Forum
<b>NGN</b>	Nigerian Naira
<b>NGOS,</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>NGWF</b>	Nigeria Governors Wives Forum
<b>NNEW</b>	NECA Network of Entrepreneurial Women
<b>NPHCDA</b>	National Primary Health Care Development Agency
<b>OFR</b>	Order of the Federal Republic KSG
<b>OFSP</b>	Orange Flesh Sweet Potato
<b>P-WASH</b>	Providing – Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>RUTF</b>	Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food
<b>SAM</b>	Severe Acute Malnutrition
<b>SCI</b>	Save the Children International
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>UN</b>	United Nations

# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>UNICEF</b>	<i>United Nations Children's Fund</i>
<b>USAID</b>	<i>United States Agency for International Development</i>
<b>WASH</b>	<i>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</i>
<b>WHO</b>	<i>World Health Organization</i>
<b>WRA</b>	<i>Women of Reproductive Age</i>

## 2.0 Overview of Participants

**Top government officials participated in the Women in Power Conference. These include Honourable Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline K. Tallen OFR, KSG, represented by the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD),**

Honorable Ministers of Finance Budget and National Planning, Health, Water Resources, Agriculture and Rural Development as well as Directors General of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and National Centre for Women Development who were represented by Directors from the respective organisations.

The Permanent Secretaries from the States Ministries of Women Affairs and Social Development who participated in the conference were from Anambra, Rivers, Gombe, Kogi and Kaduna States.

Development Partners present include the European Union, UNICEF, USAID Save the Children International, FHI360/Alive and Thrive, Care, Civil Society –Scaling Up Nutrition in Nigeria (CS-SUNN), Nutrition International, Action Against Hunger, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) Helen Keller International, Nigeria Governors' forum and the Nigeria Governors' Wives Forum.

## 2.1 Governors' Wives



There were three categories of Governors' wives in attendance including, outgoing, returning and new incoming Governors' wives.

Present at the conference were Her Excellency, Chief Mrs Betty Anwanwu Akeredolu (Ondo State), Her Excellency, Mrs Rasheeda Bello (Kogi State), Her Excellency, Mrs Fatima Mohammed (Niger State), Her Excellency, Barr. Mrs. Chioma Uzodinma (Imo State), Mrs ToboreOborewori (Incoming Delta State), Her Excellency, Dr Mrs Olayemi Oyebanji (Ekiti State), Her Excellency, Hajia Mariam Waziri Tambuwal (Chairman, Nigeria Governors Wives' Forum Sokoto State ), Her Excellency, Mrs Monica Ugwuanyi (serving Enugu State), Enugu State – Her Excellency, Mrs Nkechinyere Mba (Incoming), Her Excellency, Pastor Mrs Patience Eno (Incoming Akwa Ibom State), Her Excellency, Mrs Hafsat Kunleregumi (Yobe), Her Excellency, Mrs Priscilla Otti (Incoming Abia State), Her Excellency, Hajia Aishatu Mohammed (Bauchi), Her Excellency, Hajia Magajiya Badaru Abubakar(Jigawa State), Her Excellency, Mrs Bamidele Abiodun, (Ogun), Her Excellency, Dr Falmata Babagana Umara Zulum (Borno) and Her Excellency, Mrs Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu (Lagos State).

# 3.0 Highlights of Conference

## 3.1 Opening

The National Anthem was sung as the opening prayer before the Women's Anthem, which followed at around 10:20 am.

The conference with "Women in Power: Harnessing Our Position in Improving Nutrition Outcomes" as its theme conference's theme. was organized by the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs in partnership with the Nigerian Governors Wives Forum, CS-SUNN, the FHI Solutions Women and Girls Nutrition Project, and other stakeholders. The Permanent Secretary was represented by the Director of the Child Development Department, Mr Ali Andrew Madugu.

The goal of the conference was to improve nutrition in Nigeria through the influence of women in power through understand nutrition challenges in Nigeria, understand women's roles in improving nutrition in Nigeria and securing commitments toward improved nutrition financing in Nigeria.



Speaking at the event, Mr Ali, said the government has shown a strong commitment to the welfare of women and girls by signing and ratifying numerous international and regional instruments, treaties, and conventions that work to uphold the rights of women and girls. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Dakar Framework for Action, the African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children, the Millennium Development Goals, Vision 2020, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are just a few of the instruments that make up this list.

He emphasized the detrimental effects of malnutrition and said the timing of the conference, when it was crucial to transition to a new administration, was appropriate because more women of influence championing nutrition issues will strengthen interventions on nutrition for improved health and well-being of our target groups.

### 3.1.1 Opening Statement and Goodwill messages

Her Excellency, Hajia Mariam Maziri Tambuwal, Chairperson of the Nigerian Governor's Wives Forum and the first lady of Sokoto state welcomed attendees to the conference on behalf of the Forum of Governors Wives. Mrs Tambuwal underlined the importance of everyone's nutritional health as a prerequisite for growth and important advancement in human development. Malnutrition not only stunts growth but also causes pain and mortality. According to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a nation must have adequate nutrition to develop.

"The Forum for the Wives of Governors will advocate for policies and initiatives that promote proper nutrition, she continued, adding that as moms and as the spouses of governors, they have a great duty to positively affect nutrition issues in Nigeria". Her commitments on behalf of the forum were captured in the Call to Action.



## GOODWILL MESSAGES

### 3.1.2 Federal Ministry of Health

Mr John Uruakpa, Director/Head Micronutrient Deficiency Control, FMOH, representative of the Honourable Minister of Health (Dr Osagie Ehanere), presenting his goodwill message



said the FMOH is pleased to participate in the event as they had anticipated working with this target audience to improve nutrition outcomes. He underlined that it is important to never undervalue the influence and power of women in society, particularly when it comes to achieving goals and enhancing nutrition, and that the FMOH is willing to work with them and provide a supportive atmosphere. He wished participants fruitful discussions on behalf of the Hon Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanere."

### 3.1.3 The European Union – EU Ambassador

In her goodwill message, she revealed that the EU has developed a comprehensive gender action plan to ensure that 85% of all our programs in all focus areas including health, nutrition and food security mainstream gender equality, and women and children's right as key objectives. In the case of Nigeria, the overall gender-sensitive action will be over 400

million euros in the US 2021-2025 plan. Furthermore, NGWF is in a unique position to help prioritize people's needs, influence policies and use the governing power to convince political stakeholders at the state level The EU hopes the NGWF will continue to serve as a platform for accelerated action to improve the lives of the Nigerian people.





### 3.1.4 USAID

Mieko McKay, Deputy Director of the HPN office for USAID, reaffirmed the role of Women in Power in improving nutrition as very critical to national development, especially in addressing women and girls' nutrition in Nigeria because well-nourished women are better



able to provide for themselves, their children, and their families. However, she stated there is an urgent need for investment to scale up maternal infant, young child, and adolescent nutrition interventions, prevention and treatment for child severe acute malnutrition), micronutrient supplementation, food security, and social and behaviour change programming. She called on all stakeholders to utilize the event as a catalyst for transformative change, ignite new ideas, forge partnerships, and empower women to leverage their positions to improve nutrition

outcomes, and look forward to collaborating with other stakeholders to support this initiative so that all Nigerians achieve health and wellbeing”.

### 3.1.5 Save the Children International

*Amanuel Mamo, Director, Advocacy, Campaign, Communication and Media*

Mamo gave a brief overview of SCI work and presence in Nigeria since 2001 ensuring that all children survive, learn and are protected. He requests the first ladies to obtain the commitment of their husbands to ensure that firstly - Children have equal access to development assistance and basic social services including but not limited to food assistance, water, health nutrition even sanitation and hygiene. Secondly, all children in Nigeria have the right to life-saving healthcare assistance and basic services including but not limited to the treatment of malnutrition and other childhood-related illnesses, and access to adequate nutritious food. He urged Nigeria and Nigerians never to tolerate a world where children are denied quality health care and adequate nutrition.



### 3.1.6 Alive and Thrive

In his good will message, Dr Victor Ogbodo, the Project Director of A&T expressed the delight to be co-partners in this inaugural event with FMWA, NGWF, CS-SUNN and other partners. "Only prioritizing critical actions addressing the nutrition status of women and girls can alleviate progress towards achieving SDGs and global nutrition targets" he said. The incoming administration presents us with a great advocacy opportunity; therefore, he encouraged all the women leaders to use their good offices and other platforms to support nutrition investments for maternal and future



generations. Outstanding critical issues – six months maternity leave for women, continuous access to education for young girls, and support to credit facilities for Nigerian women. He implored participants to keep nutrition on the front burner. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

In her goodwill message, the representative of UNICEF, Nemat Hajeebhoy, Chief of Nutrition, UNICEF commended the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and social development for driving the Women in Power Conference.



In her words 'we stand at the mid-point of the SDGs, the time to act is now, and the next five years are critical to enable us to deliver the targets. We must work together, and I am optimistic that with your leadership, and commitment, Nigeria will make giant strides towards the achievement of the SDGs'.

Speaking, she said that UNICEF, on behalf of the Development Partners Group, is committed to continuing our collaboration with the

Government of Nigeria, the Nigerian Governors Forum, and the Nigeria Governors Wives Forum so that collectively with all partners we will improve the nutrition outcomes of the "Giant" of Africa, leaving no one behind.

### 3.1.7 CARE International – Jennifer Ogor

As a consortium of Care Intl and GAIN int'l implementing the foreign affairs the Netherland CASCADE project, CARE stands in solidarity with Women's affairs, Government institutions and other international and national partners to elevate the critical role nutrition plays in Nigeria. The launch of the CASCADE project coincides with this event and CARE and GAIN will continue work with ministries both at the federal and state levels, with key

strategic partners such as NGWF and CS-SUNN and stakeholders from our implementing states –Bauchi, Jigawa, Kebbi and Nasarawa to improve nutritional outcomes for 1.1 million women, girls and children under-5 and their household in Nigeria.



## Federal Ministry of Water Resources

*Engr. Charity Ojogho, Assistant Director, Water Engineering Department, FMoWR, representative of the Honourable Minister*



FMWR has contributed to nutrition outcomes with programs such as P-WASH in collaboration with the states – providing water and sanitation facilities in public places and institutions and is ever ready to partner with all stakeholders.

### 3.1.8 NAFDAC – Mrs Ummu Bomboi *representing the DG*

Mrs Boboi, highlighted the roles of NAFDAC in strengthening Food Fortification as one of the strategies adopted by Nigeria to fight malnutrition. She encouraged the first ladies to go back to implement their responsibilities in ensuring that children are put to the breast in the first 30 minutes of life and exclusively breastfed for six months and continue complementary feeding till 2 years.

### 3.1.9 Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD)

*Mrs Ifeoma Anyanwu, Director, Gender, FMARD, representative of the Honourable Minister*

Mrs Ifeoma in her goodwill message revealed that the ministry has incorporated as part of its core mandate the production of nutrition-rich food and vegetable varieties, standard production through the development of counter-seasonal cultivation, increased vegetable conservation through safe and improved storage, provision of infrastructure for hygiene

and safe handling of produce and sensitization on nutrition benefits of vegetable consumption including cooking to retain inherent nutrition. She pledged the support of the Ministry who through budgetary provision has provided infrastructures including rural development, road facilities, and seedlings provided to farmers across states – engaging extension workers who educate farmers on nutrition security.



## 3.2 KEYNOTE ADDRESS -HIGHLIGHTS

*Presented by the Honorable Minister for Women Affairs, Dame Pauline K. TALLEN OFR, KSG*

The Permanent Secretary, Alhaji Aliyu Shehu Shinkafi, represented the Honorable Minister for Women Affairs and Social Development, Dame Pauline K. Tallen, The key note address



highlighted some disturbing statistics - 55% of women of reproductive age are anaemic, increasing their risk of dying in pregnancy or childbirth and having low birth weight babies who are at increased risk of dying. The percentage of exclusively breastfed children remains abysmally low. 11% of women of reproductive age are thin or undernourished (Body Mass Index less than 18.5kg/m<sup>2</sup>) while 16% of the 15–19-year-old adolescents had acute malnutrition when compared to 3% among 20–49-year-old adult women.

The progress made by the FMWA using the instrumentality of the Accelerating Nutrition Result in Nigeria (ANRiN) Project were highlighted in the following areas:

- Successfully created awareness of Nigeria's Nutrition Landscape among Political Leaders, Stakeholders, Community Leaders and the general public in Gombe State through Advocacy visits, Sensitization workshops, Meetings at various levels, and distribution of BCC materials etc.
- Trained 1,200 Vulnerable Women, Adolescent girls and Caregivers of under 5 Children on Nutrition Education in the 3 selected LGAs (Nafada, Balanga and Yalmatu-Deba) in Gombe State to serve as advocates and peer educators in their communities. The training emphasizes iron-rich foods for pregnant women to avoid anaemia. Women are encouraged to adopt health-seeking behaviours, such as visiting the hospital for antenatal care, sleeping under an insecticide-treated mosquito net, maintaining WASH, and immunizing their babies. The Trained 1,200 Vulnerable Women, Adolescent girls and Caregivers of under 5 Children on Nutrition-Sensitive Income Generating Activities (IGAs) in the 3 selected LGAs for economic empowerment for improved household food security.
- Established 120 Self-Help Groups in the 3 selected LGAs (20 Per LGA) using the 1200 beneficiaries trained.

- Equipped the Self-Help Groups with Income Generating Machines such as grinding machines, Rice Milling and Groundnut-Oil Extraction machines as well as Starter materials to enable them take-off.
- Trained 300 Vulnerable Women, Adolescent girls and Caregivers of under 5 Children in the 3 selected LGAs on Micro Enterprises, Financial Inclusion and linked them to the Market to enable them to replicate the knowledge gained, run their businesses as well as operate effectively in their various groups.
- Produced and distributed BCC materials to over 6,000 persons on Early Initiation to Breast Feeding, Food Diversity for healthy growth and development Good Hygiene Practices etc. for improved nutrition outcomes.

He affirmed that the FMWA and other relevant Ministries have presidential approval for the establishment of Nutrition Departments. The implementation of the National Multi-Sectoral Plan of Action for Food and Nutrition in Nigeria (NMPFAN) has been hampered over the years by a lack of funding. However, with the creation of a Nutrition Department, a budget line will be established.

The Minister also praised the states of Oyo, Kaduna, Ekiti, Plateau, Ondo, and Lagos for approving the six-month paid maternity leave policy. and urged Stakeholders to empower women and girls with education and resources to enable them to access optimal nutrition for themselves and their families through.

Intensifying the multiplicity of context-specific, short- and long-term data-driven actions, including targeted financial investments in nutrition, revamping the agricultural sector, promotion of home gardens and indigenous strategies that support the production of ready-to-use therapeutic food and micronutrient supplements using locally available ingredients.

The need to prioritize funding and budget releases for nutrition at the national and states level as an investment in national human capital development was also emphasized.

# TECHNICAL SESSION

## 3.2.1 Presentations

Dr Mbang Ada-Kooffreh, the Chairman BOT, Civil Society - Scaling Up Nutrition in Nigeria (CS-SUNN) and Mrs Elizabeth Egarevba, Director, Economic Growth, Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning (FMFBNP), respectively, presented on the Nutrition Situation in Nigeria with Focus on Women and Girls Nutrition as well as Nutrition Financing in Nigeria.



**Dr Mbang Kooffeh-Ada**



**Mrs. Elizabeth Egarevba**

## 3.2.2 Observations, Questions and Answers

- Dr Nana Sanda of NPHCDA observed that there are community/household influencers trained to work in communities and create awareness. They are providing nutrition education.
- One of the First Ladies said it will be helpful if they are provided with a tool kit to facilitate their work on nutrition.
- A participant from the Women Centre stated that , when they went on advocacy visits for the six-month maternity leave, some people voiced concern that they might lose their jobs if they take that much time away from work, and others claimed that they could become pregnant again. Mrs Toyin Adewale Gabriel of Alive and Thrive noted that there are clauses on maternity leave in different states. For example, in Kaduna State, you are entitled to maternity leave every 4 years.
- The First Lady of Akwa-Ibom State, Mrs. Patience E. Eno informed the meeting that her concern was on stunting. She opined that it could be a genetic issue.

In her reaction, Dr Mbang Ada-Kooffreh also noted that stunting does not only refer to height, it also affects mental capacity.

### 3.2.3 Video Break

As a break, a CS-SUNN educational documentary video on the first 1000 days of life (from conception to a child's second birthday) was played..

### PANEL DISCUSSION

The high point of the occasion was a panel discussion on, **"Multisectoral Responsibilities in Addressing Women and Girls' Nutrition"**.

The moderator of the panel discussion was Dr. Mohammed Liman, an erudite scholar and nutrition expert, who is presently a Consultant with FMFBNB on Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria (ANRiN) Project.

Members of the panel included :

Mr John Uruakpa, (Director/Head, Micronutrient Deficiency Control, FMOH); Mrs Funmilayo Arowoogun (President of NECA'S Network of Entrepreneurial Women (NNEW) and the Managing Director of the Dews Group as well as the CEO of Arofyl Ventures); Nemat Hajeebhoy, (Chief of Nutrition, UNICEF) ; Lady Ijeoma Nnennaya Udensi (National Council for Women Development (NCWD), Gender expert, a Researcher and a Project management professional.)

### 3.2.4 Questions for the Panel Discussion

- The role of women in Power in improving nutrition is very critical to national development, what is the meeting point between your sector and Women in Power in addressing women and girls' nutrition in Nigeria? (UNICEF, USAID,)
- Empowerment is multisectoral for Women and Girls. What dimensions of empowerment can be achieved and sustained at the State level by Women in Power? (NCWD, NECA)
- Mainstreaming Nutrition and its funding into State priorities can be achieved by women in Power. What are your thoughts and what can your organization do in this regard (FMOH)?
- UNICEF: "What innovative strategies and partnerships can be fostered to ensure sustainable financing and equitable distribution of nutrition interventions for women and girls, especially in remote and marginalized areas of Nigeria?"
- USAID: "As a major development partner, what specific initiatives or best practices can USAID bring to support the multisectoral approach in addressing women and girls' nutrition, and how can these efforts be aligned with existing Nigerian government programs?"
- Nigeria Federal Ministry of Health: "How can the federal government collaborate with Women in Power to implement effective policies and programs that address women and girls' nutrition, considering the diverse challenges across different regions of Nigeria?" (FMOH)
- National Council for Women Societies: "How can civil society organizations and women's groups collaborate with government agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for policy changes, community engagement, and the empowerment of women to improve nutrition outcomes for women and girls?"
- Network of Entrepreneurial Women: "What role can women entrepreneurs play in advancing nutrition solutions and promoting local food production, processing, and distribution systems, and how can they be supported by Women in Power through capacity building and access to resources?"

### 3.2.5 Answers to Questions by Panelists

- **Answer to question 1 by UNICEF:** Chief of Nutrition, UNICEF, said that championing the course of nutrition for women and children and using the voices of women leaders is critical. We need to raise our voices for policy change. Also, synergy is key, we need to work together to achieve our common goal.
- **Answer to question 2 by NCWD:** The NCWD representative informed the meeting that, empowerment involves education, specifically on nutrition. She called on the First Ladies to create awareness and access to resources. They can purchase agricultural tools for women farmers. She then referred to SDG 2, stating that nutrition is a human rights issue. In summary, she highlighted awareness creation, access to resources and the creation of the right environment for women to thrive.
- **Answer to question 2 by NECA:** the representative of NECA added that, there is a need to encourage and support more women to be in leadership positions. In summary, she talked about increased leadership positions for women, the establishment of an agency to cater for nutrition issues and advocacy to create workspaces that are friendly for breastfeeding.
- **Answer to question 3 by FMoH:** The Director/Head Micro Nutrient Control, FMoH called on the First Ladies to persuade their husbands to allocate funds for the procurement of nutrition commodities such as Ready to Use Therapeutic Foods (RUTF), micronutrient powder etc.
- **Answer to question 4 by UNICEF,** UNICEF said that prevention of malnutrition is achievable. It costs NGN5,000 to prevent and NGN55,000 to cure. We need States to commit to changing this narrative by embarking on Vitamin A supplementation, Deworming etc. States need to match the cost of procurement of nutrition commodities. For example, it costs NGN4,000 to supplement a woman with Iron folate.
- **Answer to question 5 by USAID:** The representative of USAID reminded then Governors's wives of their convening power and goodwill in communities where they are working. She also noted that nutrition is a cross-cutting issue, whereby their area of specialization is on policy development.

### 3.2.6 Observations, Questions and Answers

- The Ondo State First Lady, Chief Mrs. Betty Anyanwu Akeredolu observed that a critical Ministry was missing in the panel. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. She said they are very important in a discussion on Food.
- The Jigawa State First Lady informed the meeting that they were faced with the challenges brought about by torrential rainfall that washed away their farmlands. So, she asked what their fate will be in a situation of that nature.
- The First Lady of Bauchi State noted that Nigeria is suffering from food insecurity, so we need to be food secured first before talking about the nutrients in the food. Hence, she opined that our focus should be on food security.
- In her contribution, the UNICEF representative informed the meeting that in 2021, the Nigerian government attended the Food System Summit and made a commitment to provide food for the whole Country.



## 3.3 CALL TO ACTION

*Presented by Hajia Hauwa Haliru, CEO, of Nigeria Governors' Wives Forum*



Speaking, she reiterated that there has been little progress in addressing the specific nutritional problems of women and adolescent girls and their families. Knowledge of symptoms of malnutrition, such as the lethargy and depression caused by iron deficiency, may be dismissed as “normal” or unimportant, further aggravating the problem. The CEO then presented the Call to Action:

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), International Non-Organization Organizations (INGOs), Donomrs, Implementing Partners (IPs) and all Nutrition Stakeholders;

### **Call on;**

Women In Power – Governors’ Wives, Female Senators, and Legislators, All women in authority from both private and public sectors to lend their voices and support them;

- Prompt releases of nutrition budgets towards implementing the National and State Multisectoral Plan of Action for Food and Nutrition.
- Empower women and girls through access to continuous education, Inclusion in decision-making and economic opportunities for optimal nutrition.
- The practice of exclusive breastfeeding and adoption of 6 months of paid maternity leave for working mothers
- Establishment of Nutrition Departments in line MDAs across all states following the approval of President Mohammed Buhari.

In addition, the Federal Government has passed the two weeks paternity leave, we therefore call on the states to follow suit so that the mothers can have the needed support from their husbands.

### 3.3.1 Commitment by the NGWF

*(Read by Hajia Hauwa Haliru, CEO NGWF)*

The NGWF comprising of the 36 states' First Ladies of the Federation hereby affirm their commitment to provide adequate support through effective advocacy for improved nutrition in the country. **The NGWF, affirm their commitment as signed and to be pursued for the next two years.** The commitments are outlined below:

- 1.To encourage home and school gardening as part of the operation 'Feed Yourself' initiation of the Federal Government of Nigeria.
- 2.To create awareness on the importance and benefits of EBF for the first six months of life to the mother, child and our nation at large
- 3.To champion the implementation of six months of paid maternity leave (4 months leave with pay and 2 months remote work if possible)
- 4.To carry out advocacy to carry out the establishment of crèches in our various offices in both government and private organizations.
- 5.To push for realistic budgeting, timely release of funds for nutrition and accountability of funds released.

### 3.3.2 Vote Of Thanks/Closing Remarks

**The Director-General, National Centre for Women Development (NCWD), Hon. Dr Asabe Vilita Bashir**

In her vote of thanks, the DG, NCWD thanked the panellists for discussing the burning issues of Women and Girls in nutrition. Continuing, she thanked the Honourable Minister for her passion and interest in nutrition. She also thanked Development Partners, MDAs,

NGOs, CSOs, Media etc. for coming. More importantly, she thanked Her Excellencies, the First Ladies of the various States present for coming out in their numbers to grace the occasion, noting that the conference has been a huge success.

Finally, she encouraged all in attendance to use the information and knowledge acquired from the conference to promote issues on nutrition and wished everyone a safe journey back to their various destinations. This brought the conference to a close.





- [www.cs-sunn.org](http://www.cs-sunn.org) 
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## CIVIL SOCIETY-SCALING UP NUTRITION IN NIGERIA