



## PRESS RELEASE

### **NIGERIA HAS THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF STUNTED CHILDREN IN THE AFRICAN CONTINENT**

The Civil Society-Scaling-Up Nutrition in Nigeria (CS-SUNN) is bringing together Civil Society Organizations, Government representative, the media, and other stakeholders to discuss and bring to the fore the problems of malnutrition among women and children in Nigeria.

**CS-SUNN convened a Policy Dialogue on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2015 at the Bolton White Hotel with the Theme "Investment in Maternal and Child Nutrition: - Critical Bridges for Sustainable National Development. CS-SUNN is determined to mobilize and strengthen Civil Societies and State Actors to Scale-Up Nutrition in Nigeria.** Malnutrition and nutrition-related diseases, however, continue to be problems of public health importance in Nigeria with the under-five mortality rate unacceptably high at 158 per 1,000 live births. Currently, under nutrition contributes to half (53 percent) of all deaths in children under the age of five. Poor nutrition in the first 1,000 days of a child's life can also lead to stunted growth. Nigeria has the highest number of stunted children in the continent and ranks second globally with about 11 million stunted children.

The main indicator for malnutrition is stunting-when children are too short for their age. Stunted children have poor physical growth which is irreversible and associated with poor brain development and reduced school and work performance. Nationally, the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) Results of 2013, reported prevalence of stunting 37%, underweight 29%, and Wasting 18% in children under five years old.

The immediate causes of malnutrition in children in the first two years of life are inappropriate breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices coupled with high rates of infections. The NDHS Report 2013 also shows that exclusive breastfeeding rate in Nigeria is only 17%. Malaria and diarrhoea incidence amongst children under five years stands at 12.5% and 10.2% respectively. Equally underlying Nigeria's very poor nutrition and health indices is lack of access to basic healthcare, water and sanitation. 53.3% of women in reproductive age have problems accessing health care while household access to improved sanitation stands at 30.1% only.

The renewed international focus and donor commitment to address malnutrition has prompted the Nigerian Government to implement new policies and initiatives, culminating in the development of National Strategic Plan of Action for Nutrition (NSPAN) 2014 -2019 which sets out nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions with measurable targets to be achieved by 2019.

#### **A Call for Action.**

CS-SUNN is a non-governmental, non-profit making coalition, made up of organizations with a shared vision to transform Nigeria into a country where every citizen is food and nutrition-secured. CS-SUNN pursues this lofty goal by engaging and mobilizing Government, and Non-State Actors to advocate for relevant Policy implementation, raise awareness, generate evidence, build capacity and stimulate communities to scale-up nutrition in Nigeria, with especial focus on maternal and child nutrition.



**CS-SUNN's Key Advocacy "ASKs" are:**

**1. Government**

- Implement the National Strategic Plan of Action for Nutrition (NSPAN 2014-2019) at every level, with emphasis on maternal and child nutrition.
- Budgetary allocation and timely release of funds for maternal nutrition and Infant & Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices and interventions, at the national, state and local government levels, and in all sectors.
- Maternity and Exclusive Breast Feeding (EBF) protection through the Extension of Maternity Leave to six months from the current three months. Lagos State is the only state to have adopted this.

**2. Media**

- Provide focused and strategic media coverage, reportage, effective tracking and monitoring of nutrition interventions in Nigeria.

**3. Private Sector**

- Support policy implementation through the development of low cost, nutritious complementary foods and home fortification of staple foods.

**4. CSOs/NGOs**

- Advocate for the implementation of maternal and child nutrition interventions
- Promote sustained community health education on nutrition;

Invitation: Your esteemed media organization is invited to cover and be part of this national call to address the problem of malnutrition in Nigeria. The program starts by...AM on Tuesday 08 September 2015.

**Contact Details/Information:**

Office Address: 19b Jimmy Carter Street, Asokoro, Abuja, Nigeria

Telephone: 09-2920460.

Email: [csslakeupnutrition@gmail.com](mailto:csslakeupnutrition@gmail.com)

Twitter: @CS-SUNN

Facebook: [www.facebook/civilsocietyscalin-upnutrition](http://www.facebook/civilsocietyscalin-upnutrition)

Website: [www.cs-sunn.org](http://www.cs-sunn.org)

**Signed: CS-SUNN Chairman**