

## OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA REMARKS BY RT. HON. DIMEJI S. BANKOLE,CFR, SPEAKER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AT THE FUTURE HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH PROGRAM CONSORTIUM(FHS-RPC) WORKSHOP, HOLDING AT CHELSEA HOTEL, CENTRAL BUSINESS AREA, ABUJA, FROM 12<sup>TH</sup>-13<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2009.

**Protocols** 

Permit me to observe that the subject of discourse at this Workshop is quite appropriate and timely, against contemporary challenges in Nigeria's health sector. I truly appreciate the overall goal of this Workshop which is meant to share experiences on innovative health interventions that benefit the poor and under-privileged segments of our population. It is also intended to identify ways of developing innovations for implementation through Public-Private Partnership (PPP). I consider this discourse of utmost relevance in the overall strive to deliver affordable, accessible, qualitative and all-encompassing healthcare through a complementary multi-stakeholder partnership. I am, therefore, delighted to be given this opportunity to share



## OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

insights, ideas and experiences with Nigerian stakeholders and some international partners in healthcare delivery.

The comprehensive reform policy of the Nigerian government, as encapsulated in the **7-Point Agenda**, has clearly identified the health sector as one of the priority areas of focus. We all appreciate the importance of health and healthcare to the economic and socio-political development of any nation. In my opinion, the wealth of any nation can be measured by the health status of its citizens, in true confirmation of the popular adage which posits that "health is wealth".

Health for the citizenry has become one of the drivers of rapid economic development. Together with education, they are the most important sectors where public attention should be focused in order to ensure greater human development. For sustainable development in healthcare, we should do more to improve funding, re-structure the institutional mechanisms of healthcare delivery, and develop implementation strategies that are innovative and enduring.

In underscoring the importance of healthcare, three out of the eight **Millennium Development Goals(MDGs)** are directly targeted at healthcare delivery. For Nigeria, current



## OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

indicators point to the fact that we are seriously lagging behind, particularly on the MDGs health components of maternal and child health. This is quite apart from the ravaging pandemics of Hiv/Aids, Malaria, Tuberculosis and other life-threatening diseases. We are informed by the office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs that the Mid-Term Assessment of the MDGs has indicated that both Africa and Nigeria face serious challenges in achieving the goals by the year 2015. It has, therefore, become quite clear that a lot more still needs to be done in terms of new initiatives and implementation strategies.

Here-in lies the significance of this unique Workshop. I enjoin participants to evolve innovative strategies to stem preventable deaths arising from poor maternal and child healthcare, especially in our rural areas. I urge you to come up with creative ways of prevention and management of Hiv/Aids, Malaria, Tuberculosis, diabetes, Polio, guinea-worm diseases, etc. I challenge you to design new strategies that would energize the focus on primary and preventive healthcare.

Let me seize this opportunity to assure our international development partners that our relevant House Committees will continue to oversee how donor funds for Nigeria's health



## OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

sector are deployed. This is one other area towards which we have decided to direct the searchlight in our anti-corruption drive. This will not only ensure effective utilization of donor-support so provided, but also ensure there is no duplication for programmes for which regular appropriation has been made. In this regard, the House of Representatives has constituted a new **Donor Committee** to oversee this complementary area of healthcare and other sectoral donor assistance.

We will intensify our oversight of the reform activities as well as track funding for the health sector. We in the Legislature do recognize that the new challenge in our strive to attain the MDGs should ginger us to act constructively and decisively in designing and strengthening legislative interventions. Initiatives such as conceptualized by this Workshop are important to us in the House of Representatives, and we look forward to the informed inputs that would arise from this Workshop.

As I wish you fruitful deliberations, I thank you all.

**Rt. Hon. Dimeji S. Bankole**,cfr Speaker