

**SPEECH BY HON MINISTER OF HEALTH, DR. OSAGIE EHANIRE ON THE
OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL PRESENTATION, MINISTERIAL LAUNCH
AND DISSEMINATION OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH PROMOTION POLICY
2019 AND ITS ANCILLIARY STRATEGIC POLICY DOCUMENTS AT
TRANSCORP HILTON HOTEL , ABUJA ON MONDAY, 30TH NOVEMBER,
2020**

PROTOCOL

It is my pleasure to play the lead role at this pivotal event in the journey to re-position and refocus Health Promotion, which is a critical part of the mandate of the Federal Ministry of Health. This landmark event to present, launch and disseminate the revised National Health Promotion Policy 2019 and its ancillary Strategic Policy Documents, is timely and desirable, because it aims to actualize Federal Government's commitment to improving health and wellbeing of Nigerians, by highlighting options to making healthier lifestyle choices.

2. It demonstrates that the Ministry of Health is not only just concerned with treating illness, but attaining and sustaining good citizen health, so that more people enjoy good health and fewer people fall sick. These Policy documents will provide guidance for the empowerment of individuals, families, households, groups and communities, with appropriate information on helpful habits, steps and behaviors to maintain good health and reduce the burden of

communicable and non-communicable diseases, but also inform on the negative impact of certain practices.

3. Health, it is said, is wealth; but available evidence shows that conditions under which people are born, grow, live, work and age, and the systems in place to handle ill-health, determine overall health outcomes. Health education in communities and settings such as schools, workplace and worship centers, present an opportunity to disseminate information on health and impart life skills that promote healthy and health seeking behaviors, which remain throughout life.

4. Health Promotion, as a concept, began at the first Global Conference on Health Promotion held in Ottawa, Canada in 1986, as part of the search for effective means of preventing disease and improving living conditions. The popular saying that 'Prevention is better than Cure', also implies that it is a cheaper and more cost-effective path to reducing illness, including diseases of public Health threat. The African Region of the World Health Organization identified Health Promotion as one of six strategic directions for addressing priority public health.

5. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Federal Ministry of Health, on acknowledging the benefit of scaled up Health Promotion activities in addressing the increasing burden of diseases, disability and

premature deaths from preventable causes, conducted an assessment in 2004, in collaboration with relevant partners, of the capacity of the health sector to implement Health education programmes. The findings revealed limited technical capacity, the need for a framework and linkages across all levels of healthcare.

6. The outcome of that study is the maiden National Health Promotion Policy of 2006, developed by Federal Ministry of Health in collaboration with stakeholders, to strengthen the Health education capacity of the Health System, to fulfill the Policy objective of improving the health status of the populace.

7. Health Promotion activities at national and sub-national levels are central to the Basic Minimum Package of Healthcare Services provided by the National Primary Healthcare Development Agency and coordinated by the Health Promotion Division of the Department of Family Health at the Federal Ministry of Health, supported by the National Health Promotion Forum, after the maiden National Health Promotion Policy was launched. The Forum is a multi-sectorial technical advisory Group focused on strengthening collaboration to implement the National Health Promotion Policy nationwide. Membership is by institutional representation by designated focal persons. I commend the effort of the Forum and seize this opportunity to solicit their continued

partnership to better the health status of Nigerians, through this programme.

8. The question on the lips of many must be: **‘what have we achieved’?** Though progress has been grudgingly slow over the last decade, I am pleased to say we have made modest advances in few areas of health Promotion programming, which include building capacity and an enabling policy environment, awareness creation, institutionalization at state level and baseline assessments, among others.

8. Despite efforts of government and partners to build healthy, safe environment in communities through public education on sanitation, hygiene and healthy living, along with preventive health services at both clinical and community settings, significant challenges remain. We are making efforts to reposition and strengthen coordination and stewardship of Health Promotion Programs at all governance levels, to improve community participation and empowerment, delivery of interventions, as well as evidence generation to guide further steps and achieve sustainable financing

10. Poor health seeking behavior is still rampant in communities and feeds poor health indices. This can be changed with adoption of simple household health practices in other settings. More

investment in health education is not just worthwhile, it is cost saving and supports socio-economic development.

11. Ladies and Gentlemen, major policy documents, including the National Health Act of 2014, the National Health Policy 2016, and the 2nd National Strategic Health Development Plan 2018 – 2022 concur that **Health Promotion is Nigeria's means to 'reducing the overall burden of disease, through behaviour and lifestyle changes'**, but the reality around institutionalization of Health Promotion, does not yet support the contention. Going forward, we shall make diligent effort to uncover challenges around health promotion programming. However, we have developed policy and strategic documents that should see health promotion become a contributor to the achievement of the health related Sustainable Development Goal 3, and attainment of Universal Health Coverage.

12. We must also realize that addressing the question of the social determinants of health and achieving health equity requires actions and partnerships, which stretch beyond the health sector. I shall be glad to welcome you all to join hands with us to examine those determinants of health from our diverse vantage points, and strive to contribute what we can to address inequity, and also to adopt healthy life styles and promote health for better health outcomes.

13. I have the pleasure of inviting your full attention, as I make a public presentation of **FIVE** important Health Promotion Strategic Policy documents today. Thereafter, a result oriented sub-national level launch and dissemination is to follow. These Strategic Policy documents include:

(I) NATIONAL HEALTH PROMOTION POLICY 2019 to contribute to achieving Nigeria's National Health Policy commitment to deliver **preventive, promotive, curative, protective, restorative and rehabilitative and palliative** healthcare to every citizen.

(II) NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR HEALTH PROMOTION 2020-2024 the maiden 5-year National Strategic Plan for Health Promotion 2020-2024 showcases Nigeria's commitment to bridging the gap between Policy and Implementation, now customized to addressing the context and peculiarities of health promotion

(III) KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINE FOR HEALTH PROMOTION 2020-2024 a tool to guide the fundamental requirement to institutionalize Knowledge Management practices for health promotion. It defines the core elements of knowledge management namely Capture, Generation, Synthesis, Storage, Archiving, Retrieval and Sharing.

(IV) COUNSELING FLIP CHART ON KEY HOUSE HOLD PRACTICES to empower individuals with right information, knowledge, and skills to improve health seeking behavior by adopting simple practices that improve Child survival, Maternal, Adolescent and Elderly health, growth and development.

(V) COUNSELING FLIP CHART ON FAMILY PLANNING/CHILD BIRTH SPACING to empower individuals with the appropriate information and knowledge to find outlets for safe and trusted Family Planning services and make decisions that increase Family Planning service uptake, thereby improving health and wellbeing of families.

14. Ladies and Gentlemen, Traditional and Spiritual leaders, friends, I am optimistic that the information and education the revised National Health Promotion Policy and its ancillary Strategic Policy documents provide, not only fosters sectorial and intersectoral collaboration to deliver key interventions, but will empower the people to easily make **'Healthy Choices'** of their own volition.

15. In conclusion, I count on the partnership and support of all stakeholders, joining hands to reposition the Health Promotion agenda, and actualize a campaign promise of President Muhammadu Buhari, which is **'to improve the health and wellbeing of Nigerians' through promotion of healthy lifestyle'**.

16. Thank you for your attention and God bless Nigeria.