

SECRET

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MEMORANDUM OF THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF HEALTH ON THE REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL CHILD HEALTH POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo to inform Council of the revised National Child Health Policy which aims to provide a holistic platform for the systematic development and implementation of evidence-based interventions for improved child health.

BACKGROUND

The National Child Health Policy was last reviewed in 2012. Following the global adoption of the Global Strategy on Women, Newborn and Adolescent Health and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is need to review the National Child Health Policy in line with the goals, objectives and strategies of these global documents. The process of finalizing the National Child Health Policy is on-going and will soon be disseminated for domestication and implementation at the State levels.

According to the Nigeria Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) 2013, children under the age of five years constitute 17% of our estimated populations. Nigeria also contribute approximately 10% of the global deaths of children though we contribute only about 1% to the global population.

The Reproductive Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) status is characterised by unacceptably high indices with Under-five Mortality Rate of 128/1000 live births and Neonatal Mortality Rate of 37/1000 live births (NDHS 2013). It is noteworthy that some improvements have been made with Under-five Mortality Rate but the decline in Maternal and Neonatal Mortality remains slow. Majority of the child deaths (about 58%) are attributable to malaria, pneumonia, diarrhoea, vaccine preventable diseases and neonatal causes with malnutrition underlying about 50% of them. All these disease conditions are preventable and if detected early are treatable with simple, cost effective essential medicines.

The goal of the revised National Child Health Policy is to ensure the survival, optimal growth and development of children in Nigeria, while the main objective is to set outcome-oriented priorities to protect and promote the health of children, and identify strategies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 3 which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

CONTENT

The protection, promotion and full enjoyment of human rights is one of the most important aspirations in today's world. As indicated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, "the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth", hence, the human rights of children must become an integral part of our education, our culture and our development.

The Infant and child mortality rates are basic indicators of a country's socio-economic situation and quality of life. The rates are important for identifying population groups at risk, and for planning, monitoring and evaluating population and health programmes and policies. Nigeria has a high total fertility rate of 5.5 and at this rate, the total population is expected to remain high. An increasing population coupled with a poor economy stretches available resources and predisposes a relatively large proportion of the populace to live below the poverty line.

JUSTIFICATION/COVERAGE

This Child Health Policy document will serve to provide a holistic platform for the systematic development and implementation of evidence-based interventions for improved child health in Nigeria, based on a careful review of the Nigerian health situation. The document proposes strategies and actions that aim to reduce the unacceptably high rates of morbidity and mortality of children in Nigeria thereby securing a better future for them.

There are nine thematic areas covered by the National Child Health Policy. These include: Perinatal and Neonatal Health, Major Childhood Illnesses, Infant and Young Child Feeding, HIV and AIDS Control, Childhood immunization, Child Healthcare Financing, School Health, Injury Prevention, Child Protection and Children Living Under Special Circumstances.

PRAYERS

The Council is hereby invited to note that:

- i. The National Child Health Policy was last reviewed in 2012.
- ii. Following the global adoption of the Global Strategy on Women, Newborn and Adolescent Health and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is need to review the National Child Health Policy in line with the goals, objectives and strategies of these global documents.
- iii. The process of finalizing the National Child Health Policy is on-going and will soon be disseminated for domestication and implementation at the State levels.
- iv. The National Child Health Policy is being reviewed in line with relevant global documents and policy guidelines and will soon be made available for domestication at the subnational levels in due course.

Honourable Minister of Health

JUNE 2018