

SECRET

JUNE 2018

NCH/61/003R

MEMORANDUM OF THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF HEALTH ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STATE NCD PROGRAMME TO STRENGTHEN COORDINATION FOR THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES IN NIGERIA

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of the memorandum is to alert members on the rising profile of NCDs as the major cause of death in the country and seek approval for every State Ministry of Health and FCT Health and Human Services to establish a programme/Branch/Unit on NCDs for a coordinated approach to address the issue nationally.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are fast outpacing communicable diseases as major cause of death globally due to the prevailing demographic and epidemiological transition.

2.2 The four major NCDs of greater concern are cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), Cancers, Diabetes and chronic pulmonary obstructive diseases (COPDs). Sickle Cell Disease is also of concern being a significant contributor to infant mortality and also cause of so much misery.

2.3 Out of the 56 million deaths worldwide each year, 38 million (68%) are due to NCDs, and 16 million (more than 40%) are premature (before the age of 70 years). 80% of the premature deaths occur in LMIC, which includes Nigeria. It is estimated that by 2030 the annual number of deaths from NCDs would increase to 52 million whilst communicable diseases mortality would reduce.

2.4 There is no nationally representative data on NCDs at the moment, but pockets of research on NCDs conducted in various parts of the country indicate a worrisome trend of increasing burden of NCDs. Empirical observations also show rampant sudden deaths attributable to NCDs involving all segments of the population including prominent persons in government.

2.5 The global economic loss due to NCDs is estimated at US\$47trillion between 2011 and 2025. NCDs are chronic in nature and associated with high out-of-pocket expenditure and therefore a major cause of poverty at family and national levels. For these reasons, NCDs have now been recognized by the United Nations as developmental challenge.

2.6 In view of the above the WHO and United Nations have instituted several initiatives to encourage member states to confront NCDs, including the Global Action Plan on the prevention and control of NCDs 2013-2025; High level meetings on NCDs (2011; 2014 and 2018 scheduled); Independent Commission on NCDs, of which the Honourable Minister of Health is a member; Global Coordination Mechanism on NCDs, which requires seamless flow of programmatic best-buy-activities to flow from global via national to subnational levels of

governance; and the inclusion of NCDs in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as SDG 3.4, which is one third reduction of premature mortality from NCDs by 2030.

3.0 ISSUES AND JUSTIFICATIONS

3.1 National efforts towards the prevention and control of NCDs are currently domiciled in the Division of Non-Communicable Diseases in the Public Health Department of the FMOH.

3.2 The NCD programme was launched in 1989 to coordinate the prevention, early diagnosis, control and formulation of policies and guidelines for NCDs in Nigeria, following the recommendation of the Expert Committee on NCDs, which was set up in 1988 by the then Honourable Minister of Health under the chairmanship of Professor O.O. Akinkugbe.

3.3 However, the NCD Programme has not been very responsive to the rising NCD burden in the country due largely to poor funding and little or no link between the national and subnational levels. Worst still many of the States do not have even a desk for NCDs at the SMOH.

3.4 With the inclusion of NCDs in the Sustainable Development Goals and declaration of 2018 as the year for action against NCDs, there is need to strengthen the coordination mechanism between the national and subnational levels to ensure the country moves together in the same direction towards the attainment of the targets for the Global Action Plan on NCDs as well as SDG 3.4

4.0 PRAYERS

4.1 Council is invited to note that:

- i. NCDs are fast outpacing communicable diseases as leading cause of death globally as well as in Nigeria;
- ii. the United Nations has recognized NCDs as developmental impediment and has included into the SDGs as SDG 3.4;
- iii. although Nigeria realized that NCDs constitute major public health concern as far back as 1988 and set up the NCD Control Programme in 1989 little has been done to strengthen the programme;
- iv. most States of the Federation do not have NCD desk at the SMOH;
- v. WHO promotes global coordination mechanism that flows from WHO via national to sub-national levels of member states; and
- vi. without a strong NCD programme at national and sub-national levels to ensure effective implementation of proven strategies to combat NCDs Nigeria will be left out in the attainment of SDG 3.4 by 2030.

Council is further invited to **approve** the establishment of State/FCT Programme on NCDs;

Honourable Minister of Health

June, 2018