

# 26<sup>TH</sup> LAPO DEVELOPMENT FORUM, 2019

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Communique

# PREAMBLE

The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Development Forum of the Lift Above Poverty Organisation (LAPO) held at the International Conference Centre, Abuja, Nigeria on Tuesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019 with the theme **“THE NIGERIAN HEALTHCARE SITUATION: WAY FORWARD”**.

The Forum was organised to review the healthcare situation in Nigeria and chart the forward for the sector.

The Forum was chaired by Prof Charles Soludo, a former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and member of the Federal Government Economic Advisory Council. The keynote address was delivered by Professor Omokhoa Adeleye, a Professor of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of Benin (UNIBEN) and Consultant Public Health and Community Physician at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH).

The Forum drew participants from the health and academic sectors, Professional Associations/trade unions, government agencies, civil society organisations, the private sector, development partners, media practitioners, religious bodies, women groups, policy makers, members of the public and other critical stakeholders in development.

Following exhaustive deliberations of the Keynote address by Professor Adeleye, the Forum came up with a 10-point communiqué as follows:

1. The Forum commended LAPO for her unrelentless contributions to improving the healthcare situation in Nigeria especially in the area of community-based awareness campaign, free medical tests, referrals and collaboration with relevant health agencies at the grassroots. Specifically, it lauded the LAPO **Community Campaign for Cancer Control (LAPO-C<sub>4</sub>)** Project and the soon-to-be commissioned multi-billion naira medical facility in Edo State, Nigeria.

2. The Forum identified poor water and sanitary conditions, deplorable maternal and child health care, the near absence of diagnostic services and poor institutional governance structure as some of the factors responsible for the increasing spate of preventable deaths and drain on national and personal resources in Nigeria. It therefore advocated for a synergy between government at all levels, the organized private sector and non-state actors with a view to addressing the current deplorable health situation in Nigeria.

3. The Forum observed that universal access to quality health care is a major weapon against poverty in Nigeria and should therefore be prioritized by local and international stakeholders.

4. The Forum called for an increase in healthcare budget that will guarantee adequate funding of critical health facilities at the grassroots, engagement of qualified health workers and other health-related matters. This, the Forum maintained, would encourage patronage of local health facilities thereby reducing medical tourism by the elites.

5. The Forum noted that individual lifestyles and superstitious beliefs have contributed to the poor healthcare situation in Nigeria. It therefore advocated public enlightenment and mindset re-orientation amongst Nigerians to boost the patronage of orthodox health care system thereby preventing avoidable deaths.

6. The Forum averred that a differentiated and targeted response system is critical to designing health intervention programmes. Specifically, it emphasized the need to unpack the average health care statistics in Nigeria for the design of health care programmes that would benefit Nigerians.

7. The Forum advocated for a new curricula on health care delivery in the Nigerian educational system, just as it stressed the need for media involvement in addressing drug abuse and promoting community health through radio and television programmes.

7. The Forum tasked Civil Society Organisations to go beyond health advocacy and serve as auditors on health care delivery expenditures with a view to holding implementing agencies accountable on how health budget funds are managed in Nigeria.

8. The Forum stated that Social Health Insurance Scheme should be aggressively pursued to ensure adequate protection for the poor. It therefore charged healthcare institutions and practitioners at all levels to develop strategic, tactical and operational health care plans and funding mechanism with proper follow-up to ensure implementation.



9. Participants called for a deliberate strategy to introduce smart technology into the healthcare delivery system in Nigeria, adding that the Science and Technology sector should collaborate with the health sector to develop and implement policies that will ensure transfer of technology nationally. The education sector can be engaged to introduce training programmes along this line.

10. The Forum enjoined the citizens to enforce the implementation of health policies and programmes that would improve the health conditions of the citizens as well as demand for accountability from governments at all levels.

**THANK YOU**