

**Health Commissioners Forum meet to Build a Stronger Health Sector**

The Nigeria Health Commissioners Forum came together for a two-day event (August 2nd-August 3rd) at Congress Hall, Transcorp Hotel Abuja to discuss collaboration and strategic partnerships within the health sector.

Nigeria Governors’ Forum Secretariat supported this discussion along with partners such as World Bank, UNICEF, ZIPLINE, Sterling Bank and the Biostadt Company.

The Director General of the NGF Secretariat, Mr Asishana Okauru said that health has become a permanent agenda at the monthly meetings of the NGF where Governors are updated on priority health issues, utilizing advocacy tools such as scorecards and state specific briefs.

“The priorities in health include the acceleration of the attainment of Universal Health Coverage, improving nutrition especially of women and under-five children, strengthening routine immunization and domestication of the National Action Plan on Health Security,” said Mr Okauru.

The Director General of NGF added that over the years, the NGF Secretariat has maintained a deep engagement with National and State MDAs as well as partners.

Also, present at the Health Commissioners Forum meeting was His Excellency, Mr Boss Mustapha, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation of Nigeria.

He stated that the health of citizens equals the health of the nation.

He commended NGF for their efforts but also acknowledged that the pandemic has caused havoc to the social development of the nation. He said it has exposed the weakness of our system.

He further stated that he is enthusiastic that the topics addressed in the meeting would lead to solutions for the methods of implementation.

The Honourable Minister of State, Federal Ministry of Health, Dr (Senator) Adeleke O. Mamora said that we are committed to working well and closely in a more strategic manner. He believes in delivering on a health mandate.

Mr Mamora added that Nigeria is in a trying time but we can work out mechanisms that will cater to the forum.

He emphasized on cooperative federalism with the federal and state levels taking charge.

Also, at this discussion was the Country Director of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in addition to the Operations Manager of World Bank.

Dr. Paulin Basinga said that she commends the efforts of the Nigeria Governors’ Forum and all organizers for the opportunity.

“At BMGF, we believe that all life has equal value. Everyone should live a productive life. I am confident that our interaction today would be one of continuous learning. If everyone is moving forward, success can take care of itself,” said Dr Bassinga.

Kathleen Whimp, the Operations Manager of World Bank said that in Africa’s most populous country, health couldn’t be more important.

Kathleen added that Nigeria’s future is in the hands of us all.

“We realize that people are important for economic growth especially with different demographics. Looking after the elderly population is expensive in the country. Nigeria is in that sweet spot where the services of health and education are needed and can be reached to fulfil potential.”

Kathleen added that they are currently in discussions to help the country purchase more vaccines.

“Our success depends on the governments success. We depend on health commissioners to make sure that the projects are successful,” said Kathleen.