

# **HERFON**

**HEALTH REFORM FOUNDATION  
OF NIGERIA**

## **Interim Report to HERFON**

Consultancy Number:

Consultancy Name/ Project Name: Engaging Political and Opinion  
Leaders in Six Selected States

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## SECTION 1

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## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
FBOs	Faith Based Organisations
FMOH	Federal Ministry of Health
FOMWAN	Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria
HERFON	Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HMDGs	Health Millennium Development Goals
HSR	Health Sector Reform
HSRP	Health Sector Reform Programme
LGA	Local Government Area
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NDHS	National Demographic and Health Survey
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PATHS	Partnership for Transforming Health Systems

## **Acknowledgements**

I wish to most respectfully express my profound appreciation to the Staff and Management of HERFON, most especially, the Executive Secretary for their various supports to the overall success of the Health Sector Reform (HSR) agenda in Nigeria. I equally acknowledge their direct involvement with the delivery of this project which is aimed at engaging political and opinion leaders in some six selected states with the central objective of ensuring that health is put high on the political agenda in the next administration in the country.

I equally wish to thank the Consultants who facilitated the coalition building workshop in the various states.

## **SECTION 2:**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria (HERFON) was set up with the central objective of promoting, advocating, facilitating and monitoring Health Sector Reform (HSR) in Nigeria to ensure better health outcome for all Nigerians. The Foundation has since inception played this role to an appreciable level. In the recent past it set up state chapters in all the states of the federation including the Federal Capital Territory (F.C.T. ) Abuja to ensure that its impact is felt and its objective of promoting, advocating, facilitating and monitoring HSR is achieved. Equally, the Partnership for Transforming Health Systems in Nigeria (PATHS) engaged HERFON to undertake the building of a coalition of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Faith Based Organisations(FBOs), Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) etc to ensure the sustenance of HSR and demand for better health services delivery. From the recommendation of the Consultants and field evidence, it was clear that there is inadequate commitment of political leaders to health at the state and LGA levels especially. Thus, it was recommended that a workshop be organised to engage the political and opinion leaders at the state and LGA levels before the next election so that health will be put high in their manifesto and in the next administration's programme.

In order to ensure the proper engagement of the political and opinion leaders HERFON decided to engage a Consultant who will take forward the task. See Terms of Reference for the task attached as annex 1 The Consultant in executing the project undertook desk review of the report of the consultants and the work plans developed by the various states coalitions, and also had some consultations with some stakeholders. At the end of the the desk review and consultations the following states were selected for the pilot project of engaging political and opinion leaders; Bauchi ( North East), Imo (South East), Zamfara (North West), Niger (North Central), Ogun (South West) and Cross River (South South). Equally, a list of projects that were developed by the coalitions, which could contribute to the success of both the coalition and HSR has been drawn up for support and is attached as annex 2. Furthermore, a budget has been prepared for the workshop in the six selected states and workshop dates suggested. A template to engage the political and opinion leaders has also been developed and is attached as annex 3.

Based on the task so far undertaken the following recommendation which in my view are critical to the success of the project are made; the prepared budget should be considered and approved, the six selected states should be contacted to start immediate preparation, the sample of invitation letter prepared should be approved and forwarded to participants.

Emerging issues so far from the task are the need to: factor the projects recommended for each state into HERFON's future priority activities; the proposed workshop to train coalition members on advocacy and lobbying skills should be considered and approved; HERFON should seek partnership with other funders to implement the projects of the coalitions listed for support; the project on engaging newly elected political office holders for Plateau state should be replicated in all the states.

### **SECTION 3: INTRODUCTION:**

The Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria (HERFON) was set up with the central objective of promoting, advocating, facilitating and monitoring Health Sector Reform (HSR) in Nigeria to ensure better health for all Nigerians. The foundation has since inception played this role to an appreciable extent. However, in the recent past it has set up state chapters to ensure that its impact is felt and overall objective of promoting, advocating, facilitating and monitoring HSR at the state level is achieved. Equally, HERFON was engaged by Partnership for Transforming Health System (PATHS) to undertake the building of coalition for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-governmental Organizations (NGO), Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and Professional Health Associations in all states of the Federation including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja to demand for and sustain HSR in their respective states. However, evidence from the field and the consultants' recommendation indicate the need for proper engagement of political and opinion leaders especially at the state and Local Government Area (LGA) level before the end of the year to ensure that health is put high on the political agenda during the next elections.

Furthermore, the Health Sector Reform Programme (HSRP) of the Federal Government initiated in 2003 to address the weaknesses of the health system as illustrated in the National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS 2003) has entered its crucial stage. This on its own requires sustainability and providing relevant information to all citizens that will enable stakeholders support the HSRP and ensure its all overall objective of improved health care delivery to Nigeria populace by the year 2010 and the Health related Millennium Development Goals (HMDGs) by 2015. Equally, the present Government is at the verge of handing over power to another administration through the conduct of elections. And there is need to effectively at stage engage the aspirants and opinion leaders through well planned advocacy to ensure they put health high on their political agenda during the campaigns and when they subsequently assume office(s).

There is no gainsaying that the HERFON state officials and the coalition members are the most appropriate foot soldiers to effectively undertake the engagement of the political and opinion leaders at this stage and in the future. Considering the fact that there is inadequate political commitment for health currently, especially at the State and LGA levels, it is imperative to engage the political and opinion leaders before they become too busy with their campaigns and too late accommodation the issue of giving health more priority in their manifesto.

## **OBJECTIVE:**

The objective of this project is

- To review the work plan of the various state coalitions to determine those that would have impact at ensuring the implementation of HSR in their states
- To ensure effective engagement of political and opinion leaders in some selected states
- To prepare budget for engaging the political and opinion leaders in each state
- To select states for engagement of their political and opinion leaders
- Develop a framework for the engagement of political and opinion leaders in at least one state in each geo-political zone

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

The task involved in this assignment will include review of documents, development of uniform national template for engaging political and opinion leader in at least one state in each geo-political zone before the end of the year. Facilitating the political and opinion leaders' engagement workshop in the selected states and writing of report of the activities undertaken to be presented HERFON

## **EXPECTED OUTPUT**

The expected output will include

- A compendium of state coalition workplans that may be supported for implementation
- Framework for engaging the political and opinion leaders
- List of states selected for the engagement of political and opinion leaders
- Budget of the workshop for engaging political and opinion leaders in the selected states.
- Report of the project

## **EXPECTED OUTCOME**

The expected outcome of this project will include;

- Better informed Political and opinion leaders on HSR/HMDGs
- Increased debate and support for the on going HSR
- Health placed high on the political agenda of political parties and political office holders
- Increased commitment for health care services and HSR in particular at the Federal, States and L.G.A levels.
- HSR sustained beyond the present administration

## **CONCLUSION**

From my candid assessment of the project so far, it is a worthwhile venture. However, its success will to a large extent depend on how soon HERFON take forward the recommendations and the emerging issues highlighted herein.

## **SECTION 4.**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the task so far undertaken the following recommendation which in my view are critical to the success of the project are made;

1. the budget prepared for the six states workshop should be considered and approved, to ensure that the process of engaging the political leaders commences,
2. the six selected states should be contacted to start immediate preparation, as there is not enough time at our disposal considering the fact that December has only three appropriate weeks for any meaningful engagement to be made,
3. the sample of invitation letter prepared should be approved and forwarded to participants, so that participants would be given adequate notice to ensure a larger turn out of participants. As evidence from past assignments shows that when participants have short notices, attendance is almost always poor.

### **EMERGING ISSUES**

Emerging issues so far from the task are the need to:

1. factor the projects recommended for each state into HERFON's future priority activities, as most of the projects so recommended will not only make HERFON achieve its objective, but will also contribute immensely to the success of the coalitions and the improvement of health care service delivery;
2. consider and approve the proposed workshop to train coalition members on advocacy and lobbying skills, as field evidence revealed that most of the coalition members do not have adequate knowledge of advocacy and lobbying skills. Since, the bulk of their job as a coalition entails advocacy and lobbying the earlier they acquire this skills to more effective and efficient they are likely to be;
3. encourage HERFON to seek partnership with other funders (Partners) to implement the projects recommended for support, as the total cost of the project is likely more than HERFON budget for support to the coalitions. Again there is the need to involve other stakeholders in the nurturing of the coalitions;
4. replicate the project on engaging newly elected political office holders for Plateau state in all the other states. This is because in my considered opinion engaging newly elected political office holders early in the life of the next administration could make them more positively disposed to the issues of health.