



Advocacy Strategy for Women's and Girls' Nutrition in Nigeria 2023-2026

Developed by the Civil Society for Scaling Up Nutrition, Nigeria (CS-SUNN) (March 2023)

List of acronyms and abbreviations

A&T: Alive and Thrive
AFENET: African Field Epidemiology Network
AGRA: Alliance for a Green Revolution
ARN-SUNN: Academic and Research Network
CBO: Community-Based Organization
CSO: Civil Society Organization
CS-SUNN: Civil Society for Scaling Up Nutrition, Nigeria
CWA: Christian Women Association
FBO: Faith-Based Organization
FIDA: International Federation of Women Lawyers
FMARD: Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
FMED: Federal Ministry of Economic Development
FMoA: Federal Ministry of Agriculture
FMoE: Federal Ministry of Education
FMoFBP: Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and Planning
FMoH: Federal Ministry of Health
FMoI: Federal Ministry of Information
FMoLE: Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment
FMWA&SD: Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Sustainable Development
FOMWAN: Federation of Muslim Women Associations in Nigeria
GAIN: Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
HKI: Helen Keller International
INGO: International Non-Governmental Organization
MDA: Ministries, Departments and Agencies
NAFOWA: Nigeria Airforce Officers' Wives Association
NAOWA: Nigeria Army Officers' Wives Association
NAWOJ – Nigeria Association of Women Journalists
NCN: National Council on Nutrition
NCWS: National Council of Women Society
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
NI: Nutrition International
NPHCDA: National Primary Health Care Development Agency
NSN: Nutrition Society of Nigeria
NUJ: Nigerian Union of Journalists
POWA: Police Officers' Wives Association
UN: United Nations



I. Background

This strategy is developed as part of the Women's Nutrition project, a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded initiative implemented by FHI Solutions and partners globally and by the Civil Society for Scaling Up Nutrition, Nigeria (CS-SUNN) in Nigeria. The project aims to co-create and champion an Action Agenda to prioritize and accelerate policy and finance commitments for women's and girls' nutrition at global, regional, and country levels in four priority areas: healthy diets, care (health and social protection), gender equality and a multi-system enabling environment. Nigeria is one of the first countries under the project to identify and address the priority policy, practice, and behaviour changes required to prioritize women's and girls' nutrition and advance the Action Agenda.

FHI Solutions and partners define women's and girls' nutrition as *meeting the daily macro- and micro-nutrient requirements from a healthy diet that builds immunity and protects against diseases and all forms of malnutrition. Supported by the availability of and access to nutritious foods and health services, gender equity and increased empowerment, income earning potential, and decision-making ability, women's and girls' nutrition impacts her ability to flourish across all stages of life, making it foundational for her health, development, prosperity, and thriving communities*¹.

This definition includes maternal nutrition and the nutritional needs of women and girls across the lifecycle, including adolescent girls and non-pregnant and non-lactating women.

In Nigeria, CS-SUNN has built a coalition that will advance the Action Agenda at the country level with a focus on gender equality as the most salient area requiring urgent action for improving women's and girls' nutrition in the country. The coalition will advocate to actualize the goal of "**Women and girls empowered for optimal nutrition in Nigeria by 2028**". The strategy is intended to guide the coalition to agree on specific asks towards this goal and implement a joint work plan, building on and adding to national initiatives supporting women's and girls' nutrition. In a stakeholder workshop that CS-SUNN conducted in December 2022², women's and girls' empowerment was identified as crucial to improve nutrition outcomes and therefore as the top advocacy asks to prioritize women's and girls' nutrition.

Box 1: Policy context: women and girls losing out to mothers; inadequate budget

Women and girls vs. mothers: Most nutrition-relevant policies and plans, as well as nutrition interventions prioritize maternal and child nutrition, with little attention to the specific needs of non-pregnant, non-lactating women and adolescent girls. These include: the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent and Elderly Health Plus Nutrition (RMNCH+M) operational plan, the Maternal, Infant, Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN) Policy, the National Gender Policy, National Policy on Food and Nutrition in Nigeria, the National Multisectoral Plan of Action for Food and Nutrition, the Agricultural Sector Food Security and Nutrition Strategy, the National Strategic Plan of Action for Nutrition (NSPAN). There is low awareness that nutrition for women and girls matters, regardless of whether they become mothers or not.

Empowerment is limited in scope: some national policies such as the National Gender Policy (2021-2026), the National Strategic Plan of Action for Nutrition (NSPAN) (2021-2025), and the Agricultural Sector Food Security and Nutrition Strategy (2016-2025) do address some components of women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition, but there are still existing gaps, e.g. nutrition of non-pregnant, non-lactating women and adolescent girls nutrition is not well prioritized/captured in the policies.

The nutrition budget is insufficient to create impact: The federal budgetary allocation for nutrition activities across sectors was N840.25 million (approx. USD1.824 million) in the fiscal year 2021, less than 7% of the total budget of the country, with a performance (actual expenditure)* of only 37.75%. A N749.24 million (approx. USD1.627 million) budget for priority activities under the federal government nutrition program in the fiscal year 2022** showed a performance under 50%. Although there are not gender disaggregated data available, it is likely that the actual expenditure for women's and girls' nutrition activities was even lower.

*Based on the nutrition spending reports from Ministries, Departments and Agencies.

**CS-SUNN Trend Analysis of Federal Government Nutrition Intervention

¹ Definition developed using the Schiffman framework and vetted by FHI Solutions partners.

² The workshop brought together a cross section of representatives from nutrition line ministries, departments and agencies, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), academia and United Nations (UN) agencies.



In particular, this strategy looks to shift the needle on three distinct aspects of women's and girls' empowerment: more women in decision-making positions – both in Federal Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), and in the private sector - where they can adopt, shape and influence policies and programmes that improve women's and girls' nutrition; more women and girls having access to and utilizing public empowerment schemes such as farming and business loans, scholarships, employment and livelihood support, which directly impact the nutrition status of the household, including women's and girls'; and greater opportunities for girls to have quality education from primary to tertiary level, which evidence shows results in better health and nutrition outcomes for herself, families, communities and the country.

As a short-term policy solution, the coalition will advocate for the nutrition department of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs to adopt a national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition. The Guideline is intended to create a convergence of different interventions across sectors/policies addressing specifically the nutritional needs of women and girls. Nigeria has policies, commitments, and a governance architecture to advance nutrition and address it through a multisectoral approach³. For this project, we will be referencing the National Gender Policy (2021 – 2026), among others (Box 1).

II. The issue

Malnutrition is the single largest cause of death among women globally⁴. More than one billion women worldwide experience at least one form of malnutrition, and women suffer from at least 60% of the world's malnutrition⁵. Malnutrition is a gender equality issue, since women and girls are twice as likely to suffer from malnutrition than men and boys⁶.

In Nigeria, as in many developing countries, women and girls traditionally eat last and have lower-quality food, often leading to poorer nutritional intake. Undernutrition in adolescent girls aged 15–19 years in Nigeria has been variously reported to range between 23% and 58%⁷. Undernutrition was more prevalent among rural adolescents than urban adolescents and was attributed more to socio-economic and dietary factors⁸. In some rural communities, negative social and cultural norms deny women and girls their right to good nutrition. Women make up nearly half of the Nigerian population but remain underrepresented in policymaking, including on issues related to their health and wellbeing⁹. Key nutrition indicators are presented in Box 2.

Box 2: Key nutrition facts in Nigeria

- 38% of women over 18 are overweight
- 16% are obese
- 29% of 0-5 months exclusively breastfed
- 32% of under 5 are stunted
- 7% of under 5 are wasted
- 55% of WRAs are anaemic
- 68% of under 5 are anaemic (DHS 2018)
- 56% of women aged 15-49 have minimally adequate dietary diversity (DHS 2018)
- 25% of women over 18 are diabetic

Source: All data from the [Global Nutrition Report 2022 Nigeria Country Profile](#) unless stated otherwise.

Empowering women to have greater control over their income is key, as evidence shows they are more likely to prioritize spending on nutritious foods, thereby improving nutrition for the entire

³ CS-SUNN Trend Analysis of Federal Government Nutrition Intervention

⁴ GBD Diet Collaborators, Health effects of dietary risks in 195 countries, 2019, The Lancet

⁵ Results UK: Malnutrition is Sexist: The determinants of nutrition for women and girls; 2021.

⁶ Plan International Canada, 2016, How Empowering Girls and Women Can Change the World; FAO, FAO Programme: Food security, 2015.

⁷ Adinma *et al.*, 2017

⁸ Adinma J, Umeononihu O S, Umeh M N. Adolescent, and pre-pregnancy nutrition in Nigeria. Trop J Obstet Gynaecol 2017 ;34 :1-5

⁹ <https://drpcngr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FACTSHEET-ON-WOMEN-HEALTH-IN-NIGERIA.pdf>



family¹⁰. The barriers for women to access adequate diets (food of at least four food groups, considering the quality and quantity) are numerous and include restricted decision-making power, with a decision-making score of 2.43 on 5¹¹, regulatory barriers, lack of a supportive work environment. In addition, limited access to factors of production, with for example an access to financial services score of 2.1 on 5¹², poverty affecting four out of 10 Nigerians¹³ and poor policy implementation with only 58% of legal frameworks that promote, enforce and monitor gender equality achieving their goals¹⁴ also stand in the way of women and girls accessing healthy diets. This strategy addresses women's and girls' empowerment as a root cause of all the above-listed barriers.

III. Advocacy strategy objectives

The overall goal of the strategy

Women and girls empowered for optimal nutrition in Nigeria by 2028.

Specific objectives of the strategy:

1. Support the nutrition department of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to develop a national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition by September 2024.
2. Secure commitments of Federal Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) relevant to nutrition (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) to increase the number of women in decision-making positions by at least 10% by 2024.
3. Increase gender equity in the access and utilization of public economic empowerment schemes by at least 10% at the national level by 2024.
4. Increase awareness of professionals at the federal level, who have the potential to become champions, on the benefits of girls staying in school beyond basic education and the impact on nutrition outcomes.
5. Empower women in the workplace: Secure commitments by the private sector to adopt policies to remove the barriers that women face in accessing paid employment and thriving in the workplace.

¹⁰ Voufo, Belmondo Tanankem, et al. "Women empowerment and intra-household dietary diversity in Nigeria" *Journal of Research in Gender Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, July 2017, pp. 39+. *Gale Academic OneFile*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A523454000/AONE?u=anon~de1040&sid=googleScholar&xid=cd08cb59. Accessed 23 Feb. 2023.

¹¹ USAID Women's Economic Empowerment and Equality (WE3) Dashboard 2021. It contains scores assessing women's inclusion in the economy. Scores range from 0 to 5, where higher values indicate greater women's economic empowerment and equality.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ World Bank report 'A Better Future for All Nigerians: Nigeria Poverty Assessment 2022'.

¹⁴ UN Women Count <https://data.unwomen.org/country/nigeria>



Scope, timeframe, and alignment with other national plans

Table 1: An overview of where the strategy aligns with existing policies and could leverage them

Advocacy Objectives	Policy / Policy Scope to be leveraged on	Advocacy Timeframe	Policy Timeframe
<p>1/ Support the nutrition department of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to develop a national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition by September 2024.</p> <p>2/ Secure commitments of Federal Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) relevant to nutrition (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) to increase the number of women in decision-making positions by at least 10% by 2024.</p> <p>3/ Increase gender equity in the access and utilization of public economic empowerment schemes by at least 10% at the national level by 2024.</p> <p>4/ Increase awareness of professionals at the federal level on the benefits of girls staying in school beyond basic education and the impact on nutrition outcomes.</p> <p>5/ Empower women in the workplace: Secure commitments by the private sector to adopt policies to remove the barriers that women face in accessing paid employment and thriving in the workplace.</p>	<p>The National Gender Policy *(revised) pushes for '<i>a different approach which would not only ensure women empowerment, but a sustainable development for the country through gender equality policy initiatives would help balance power relations between men and women and transform the institutions which continue to perpetrate gender injustice, poverty, and underdevelopment</i>'. *http://wrapanigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/NATIONAL-GENDER-POLICY.pdf</p>	2023-2024	2021-2026
<p>1/ Support the nutrition department of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to develop a national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition by September 2024.</p> <p>2/ Secure commitments of Federal Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) relevant to nutrition (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) to increase the number of women in decision-making positions by at least 10% by 2024.</p> <p>3/ Increase gender equity in the access and utilization of public economic empowerment</p>	<p>The National Strategic Plan of Action for Nutrition (NSPAN)** calls for '<i>improving the care practices for all women (access to health and nutrition services, reduction of the workload) and empowering women in households, society in general and in decision-making</i>'. ** https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/nig158612.pdf</p>	2023-2024	2021-2025



<p>schemes by at least 10% at the national level by 2024.</p> <p>4/ Increase awareness of professionals at the federal level on the benefits of girls staying in school beyond basic education and the impact on nutrition outcomes.</p>			
<p>2/ Secure commitments of Federal Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) relevant to nutrition (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) to increase the number of women in decision-making positions by at least 10% by 2024</p>	<p>The Agricultural Sector Food Security and Nutrition Strategy*** specifies that targeting women will increase their control over resources and decision-making, with attendant benefits for nutrition.</p> <p>*** https://www.nipc.gov.ng/product/agricultural-sector-food-security-and-nutrition-strategy-2016-2025/</p>	<p>2023-2026</p>	<p>2016-2025</p>

IV. Advocacy windows and national opportunities

Advocates for women's and girls' nutrition in Nigeria must engage in strategic national and international opportunities for media dialogues, community sensitization, knowledge sharing, and targeted service delivery. Some of the moments that the partner coalition can leverage for advocacy include:

- International Women's Day: 8 March
- World Breast Feeding Week: 1-7 August
- National Nutrition week: between August and November
- National Committee for Food and Nutrition quarterly meetings
- Budget cycle window
- International Day of the Girl Child: 11 October
- World Health Day: 7 April
- World Health Worker Week: early April

In addition, the Nigeria for Women Project, a cooperative forum supported by the World Bank in 33 states of Nigeria, will be a pivotal platform to leverage for advocacy.

V. Target audiences

Stakeholders relevant to this strategy have been mapped on the interest versus influence axis during a 2022 workshop. The resulting maps have identified which audiences are critical and require close collaboration. The Table below builds on those maps.

Table 2 below shows the level of influence of the stakeholders on a scale of low, medium and high. How much the organizations or individuals can influence the achievement of the advocacy goal is key in the project implementation.



Primary Audience/ Priority (Long term view)		Level of Influence
Government		
1.	Office of the Vice President Federal Republic of Nigeria as chairman of NCN	High
2.	Federal Ministry of Health	High
3.	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs	High
4.	National Assembly, Senate and House Committees on Health, Senate and House Committees on Appropriation, Women Affairs	Low
5.	Federal Ministry of Agriculture	High
6.	Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget, and Planning	High
7.	Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment	High
8.	Federal Ministry of Education	High
Secondary Audience/ Mid-term		Level of Influence
1.	Governors Wives Forum	Medium-High
2.	Media	Medium-High
	Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), National Guild of Editors (NGE), Association of Nigeria Health Journalists (AHNEJ)	low
3.	Development Organisations	
	Academic and Research Network (ARN-SUNN)	Low
	Nutrition Society of Nigeria	Low
	USAID-Advancing Nutrition	Low
	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)	Low
	African Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET)	Low
	UNICEF	Low
	Nutrition International (NI)	Low
	Breakthrough Action	Low
	Hellen Keller International	Low
	Alive & Thrive	Low
	National Council on Nutrition	High
	Nigeria Governors' forum	Medium High
4.	Faith-based associations	
	Christian Association of Nigeria	low
	Federation of Muslim Women Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN)	low
5.	National Council for Women Society (NCWS)	low
6.	Women associations (Nigeria Airforce Officers Wives Association (NAFOWA), Nigeria Army Officers Wives Association (NAOWA), Police Officers Wives Association (POWA), International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Federation of Muslim Women Associations of Nigeria FOMWAN, Christian Women Association (CWA)	High



Allies and Champions

Those who will directly benefit or were persuaded to join the coalition because of similar goals or are sympathetic to our goal; and those identified as opinion leaders with influence who can advance the goal of ‘Women and girls empowered for optimal nutrition in Nigeria by 2028’.

Allies		Champions
1.	Alliance for a Green Revolution (AGRA)	Mrs. Beatrice Eluaka, former Executive Secretary, CS-SUNN)
2.	Network of Entrepreneurial Women (NNEW)	Hajia Lami Adamu Lau, President National Council for Women Society (NCWS)
3.	Nigeria Governors' Wives Forum	Chairperson, Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ)
4.	Academic and Research Network (ARN-SUNN)	Chairperson, International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA)
5.	Hellen Keller International	Dr. Folasade Yemi-Esan, Head of the Civil Service of the Federation
6.	Alive & Thrive	

VI. Messages

The messaging framework of the advocacy is women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition.

Topline messages

1. Investing in women's and girls' nutrition creates a ripple effect with multiple benefits for girls, women, families, communities, and the country at large.
2. Nigeria has no roadmap yet to guide optimal nutrition for women and girls. The time is now to develop policies and plans for the empowerment of women and girls to improve the country's nutritional indices.
3. Nutrition is a gendered issue. Nutrition and gender-responsive policies and institutions are needed now in Nigeria to improve women's and girls' nutrition and participation in public life.
4. We know that nutrition-relevant, women and girl-centred policies and programmes are designed when women are at the table. Governments at all levels and MDAs in Nigeria must commit to increasing the number of women in decision-making positions by 10% come 2024. This will propel Nigeria towards attaining gender equality goals and optimal nutrition for women and girls.
5. Keep girls in school! The Government of Nigeria must act now to prioritize the girl child education beyond universal basic education. Evidence shows that where girls and women reach higher education attainment, nutrition improves for themselves, their families, and their communities.
6. Women and girls face discrimination in accessing productive assets, positions of power, learning and education, finance, and paid work. Increase women's and girls' access and utilization of public empowerment schemes by at least 10% by 2024 at the national level to reduce gender inequalities. This, in turn, will improve children's nutrition, health, and school attendance and contribute to overcoming poverty.



Messages per advocacy objective and target audience

Advocacy Objective One: Support the nutrition department of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to develop a national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition by September 2024

EXPECTED CHANGES	Indicator of change	Suggested responsibility
Buy-in/Approval of Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWA&SD) for the development of a national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition obtained.	Number of consultative meetings with FMWA&SD showing commitment/approval of Hon. Minister of FMWA&SD to develop the national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition.	CS-SUNN, FHI Solutions, FMWA&SD, FMED, FMARD
Draft roadmap for national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition developed.	Draft document of the national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition.	CS-SUNN, FHI Solutions, FMED, FMWA&SD, FMOH, FMARD, NPHCDA
Validation and launch of the national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition by the Honourable Minister of FMWA&SD.	Report and evidence of validation and launch of a national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition.	CS-SUNN, FHI Solutions, FMWA&SD, FMED, FMARD. Other line Ministries and partners
KEY BARRIERS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-prioritization of women's and girls' empowerment by key Ministries, Departments and Agencies in Nigeria. • Non-recognition of the need to empower women and girls for optimal nutrition. • Lack of understanding of key MDAs on the relationship between women's and girls' empowerment and nutrition outcomes. • Lack of technical support, funding, and others, to develop guidelines for women's and girls' empowerment. • Opposition groups (gender chauvinists, anti-women groups), religious and traditional beliefs and social norms that undermine the empowerment of women and the girl child. 		
MESSAGES:		
<p>Target Audience: Honourable Minister, FMWA&SD key personnel of FMWA&SD</p> <p>Message:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition is a key institutional mechanism for the ministry to deliver on your mandate for the development of women with equal rights and responsibilities. The development of the national Guideline is key to achieving women's and girls' empowerment. Now is the time to initiate, approve and implement the national Guideline. <p>Target Audience: Partners working in women and girls-related spaces which includes project champions and allies.</p> <p>Message:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time is now! Join us to optimize the nutrition of women and girls in Nigeria. Improving women's and girls' nutrition will have a ripple effect on all aspects of a woman's life – from education to work and participation. 		



Advocacy Objective Two: Secure commitments of Federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) on the inclusion of women in decision-making positions by at least 10% by 2024 (*the baseline will be included here following a brief survey of MDAs conducted by CS-SUNN*).

EXPECTED CHANGES	Indicator of change	Suggested responsibility
Improved awareness on the inclusion of women in decision-making positions	Number of sensitization, enlightenment and promotional activities targeting Federal Executive council members on the inclusion of women in decision making positions	CS-SUNN, FHI Solutions, FMARD, Media
Secure commitments of MDAs to include women in decision-making positions	Number of commitments generated from relevant MDAs and key stakeholders (particularly traditional and religious groups) on the inclusion of women in decision-making positions/ Number of women across MDAs included in decision-making positions).	CS-SUNN, FHI Solutions, FMARD, Media
Engage public institutions at the national level for advocacy to prioritize women's inclusion in decision-making positions.	Number of capacity-building initiatives to strengthen public institutions on inclusion and participation of women in decision-making positions.	CS-SUNN, FHI Solutions, NBA, FMED, FMARD
KEY BARRIERS:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Discriminatory laws and gaps in legal protection for women and girls • Gender gaps in access to education and learning by women and girls • Low political will and commitment to include women in decision-making positions • Traditional religious beliefs and social norms undermining the place of women in decision-making positions • Work environments that tolerate acts of misconduct such as harassment and discrimination against women and girls • Lack of constitutional provisions with legal frameworks on gender equality, laws that prohibit discrimination against women with key elements around women having equal rights to and the same legal protection as men. 		
MESSAGES:		
<p>Target Audience: Ministers and administrators of key line Ministries, Department and Agencies</p> <p>Message:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nigeria endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 5, on achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. Now more than ever, Nigeria must commit to achieving this goal. This starts with you in your Ministries and Departments: we need to see more women in decision-making positions in the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Science and Technology. You will reap the benefits across all sectors – including improved nutrition and health outcomes. <p>Target Audience: Presidency and Government at all levels</p> <p>Messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women make up nearly half of the Nigerian population and are active in the food system as farmers, distributors of food products and caregivers who cook food for their families. In line with Nigeria's 		



commitment at the Food Systems Summit in 2021, Nigeria should empower women for greater access to quality nutrition.

- Keep the promise! Fulfil Nigeria's commitment at the International Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women by implementing the National Gender Policy. Empowering women and girls directly impact the country's development.

Advocacy Objective Three: Increase by at least 10% the number of women benefitting from public economic empowerment schemes at the national level by 2024 (*the baseline will be included here following a brief survey of empowerment schemes' beneficiaries conducted by CS-SUNN*).

EXPECTED CHANGES	Indicator of change	Suggested responsibility
Improved awareness on the need for gender equity in the access and utilization of public economic empowerment schemes.	Number of sensitization, enlightenment, and promotional activities to heads of different empowerment schemes such as farm loans, business loans, scholarships etc., on gender equity in the access and utilization of public economic empowerment schemes	CS-SUNN, FHI Solutions, FMOI, Media, FMED, FMARD.
Commitments secured from public economic schemes to increase gender equity in the access and utilization of public economic empowerment schemes by at least 10% at the national level by 2024.	Number of commitments generated from public economic schemes to increase gender equity in the access and utilization of public economic empowerment schemes by at least 10% at the national level by 2024.	CS-SUNN HQ and State Chapters, FHI Solutions, FBOs, CBOs and others

KEY BARRIERS:

- Inappropriate knowledge and discriminatory attitudes towards women and girls that limit access to financial resources
- Men's perceived power over women's income-generating work
- Low earning power of the majority of women
- Political and social systems that limit access and utilization of public economic empowerment schemes
- Lack of finance, lack of essential business skills
- Societal challenges and prevailing gender norms.
- Lack of empowerment opportunities for women

MESSAGES:

Target Audience: Presidency/Government of Nigeria:

Messages:

In line with the National Gender Policy, empower women with resources to improve their access to diverse and adequate diets:

- Adopt appropriate measures to identify, acknowledge and address the negative impact of the economic and financial crisis on women and girls and maintain adequate levels of funding for gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- Improved access to and utilization of public and private economic empowerment schemes by women will contribute to the attainment of gender equity in Nigeria, liberate women from all forms of institutionalized discrimination, and pull them out of economic bondage.

Target Audience: Religious Organisations / FBOs/CBOs:

Message:

- Become advocates! Women and girls are denied access to means of income, empowerment opportunities/schemes, and equal access to adequate housing, land, and control of household finances. Take



steps to revise laws and abolish practices that discriminate against women and girls. This would empower women and girls and impact their decisions regarding their nutrition and health.

Target Audience: Household-level stakeholders (Fathers, Husbands, Family in-laws, Relatives etc.).

Message:

- Women's productive roles go beyond their domestic responsibilities! Households should involve women in financial decisions and allow them access to and utilization of public economic empowerment schemes. These women eventually give back for the betterment of the children, homes, communities, and the country at large.

Target audience: Employers/Private Sector

Message:

- Lack of adequate earning power reduces productivity for women which in turn affects their nutrition and that of their families. Strengthen efforts and investment to increase the productivity of rural women's work through improved access to credit and savings; to critical infrastructure and services, such as transport, energy, water supply and extension services and markets to improve their earning power which can contribute towards empowerment for optimal nutrition for women and girls.

Advocacy Objective Four: Increase awareness of professionals at the federal level on the benefits of girls staying in school beyond basic education and the impact on nutrition outcomes

EXPECTED CHANGES	Indicator of change	Suggested responsibility
Increased awareness of professionals at the federal level on the educational attainment of the girl child beyond the universal basic education by 2024.	Number of sensitization, enlightenment and promotional activities targeting professionals on benefits of girls staying in school beyond the universal basic education by 2024.	CS-SUNN, FHI Solutions, FMOE, and Media partners working in the education space

KEY BARRIERS:

- Ignorance of the importance of education
- Poverty
- Traditional, religious beliefs & social norms that undermine the girl child education.
- Early girl marriage
- Poor/low budgetary allocations for education: N1.79 trillion (approx. USD3.69 million) representing about 8.8 % of the federal budget

MESSAGES:

Target Audience: Presidency/Government of Nigeria, religious groups, women groups, and media.

- Leave No Girl behind! Keep girls in school beyond universal basic education to improve the level of educational advancement for women and girls. Less girls dropping out of school leads to fewer early marriages, more educated women and better nutrition and health outcomes. This in turn will accelerate development.
- Educating girls pays off: A study by rights group Plan International and financial services firm Citi Global Insights shows that for every dollar invested into girls' rights and education, developing nations would get returns of \$2.80¹⁵. Invest in girl child education beyond the universal basic education to reap these returns.

¹⁵ Plan International and Citi Global Insights, 'The Case for Holistic Investment in Girls', October 2022 <https://plan-international.org/publications/the-case-for-holistic-investment-in-girls/>



Advocacy objective five: Empower women in the workplace: Secure commitments by the private sector to adopt policies to remove the barriers that women face in accessing paid employment and thriving in the workplace

EXPECTED CHANGES	Indicator of change	Suggested responsibility
Increased awareness of the barriers women face in accessing paid employment and thriving in the workplace and solutions implemented.	Number of sensitization, enlightenment, and promotional activities to the private sector to adopt policies that remove the barriers women face in accessing paid employment and thriving in the workplace.	CS-SUNN, FHI Solutions, , FMOI, Media, FMED, FMARD, FMOE, private sector.
Commitments secured from the private sector to adopt policies to remove the barriers that women face in accessing paid employment and thriving in the workplace.	Number of commitments secured from the private sector to adopt policies that remove the barriers women face in accessing paid employment and thriving in the workplace	CS-SUNN HQ and State Chapters, FHI Solutions, , private sector, FBOs, CBOs, and others

KEY BARRIERS

- Poverty
- Discriminatory laws and gaps in legal protection for women and girls
- Gender gaps in access to education and learning by women and girls
- Low political will and commitment to include women in key decision-making positions
- Traditional religious beliefs and social norms undermining the place of women in decision-making positions
- Work environments that tolerate acts of misconduct such as harassment and discrimination against women and girls
- Lack of constitutional provisions with legal frameworks on gender equality, laws that prohibit discrimination against women with key elements around women having equal rights to and the same legal protection as men

MESSAGES:

Target Audience: Employers /Private sector:

Messages:

- Women hold only 27% of senior management positions in the private sector according to a gender gap assessment conducted by the International Finance Corporation¹⁶. More women leaders are needed to drive policy changes in the workplace in favor of women, which translates into increased economic empowerment, agency and access to good nutrition. Empower women in the workplace:
 - a. Recruit, promote and include women in decision-making positions in organizational management
 - b. Create the conditions to attract and retain more women in paid employment: e.g., childcare options, breastfeeding policies, learning and training opportunities, promotion opportunities
 - c. Adopt a zero-tolerance policy for harassment in the workplace
- Adopt regulations and workplace policies to ensure decent work conditions for women, in relation to working hours, conditions and wages, access to health care services, and other social and economic benefits.

¹⁶ International Finance Corporation 'Gender equality in Nigeria's private sector', 2021. https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/region_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/sub-saharan+africa/priorities/gender/gender_equality_in_nigerias_private_sector_nigeria2equal



VII. Carrying out the strategy with evidence and a partner coalition

Generate evidence

The Women's Nutrition project completed a stakeholder mapping to surface key targets and allies for the Action Agenda at the country level, a policy review and opinion leader interviews to identify the gaps and opportunities for policy advocacy for women's and girls' nutrition. This formative research informs the development and implementation of the advocacy strategy.

Establish and sustain partnerships

CS-SUNN held a national nutrition advocacy workshop in December 2022 in Abuja to identify the key advocacy asks, establish the basis of a partnership to advance the project and set the tone for continued engagement to achieve its goal and objectives. This partnership will increase the lease of knowledge, expertise, and resources available to the project and includes the organisations listed below:

- Academic and Research Network (ARN-SUNN)
- Nutrition Society of Nigeria (NSN)
- Nutrition Line MDAs (Federal Ministries of Health, Women Affairs, Agriculture, Information and Culture, Water Resources, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, Office of the Vice President)
- USAID-Advancing Nutrition
- Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)
- African Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET)
- UNICEF
- Nutrition International (NI)
- Breakthrough Action
- Hellen Keller International
- Alive & Thrive
- National Council of Women Society including all women Groups like NAFOWA, NAOWA, FIDA, and NAWOJ.
- Nigeria for women project

VIII. Leadership, coordination, and planning

Due to the timelines and funds allocated to operationalize this strategy, CS-SUNN and its partners cannot achieve the above-stated objectives alone, therefore, the need for coalition members to incorporate this in their work is very important. To achieve this, partners and coalition members will be encouraged to incorporate messages and asks in their work where possible. CS-SUNN will also collaborate with them to magnify the messages by adding their voices during traditional and social media campaigns.

CS-SUNN will also work closely with FHI Solutions staff at the global and country level to develop and implement an action plan for this advocacy strategy. CS-SUNN will work with the creative agency supporting the Women's Nutrition project at the country level to refine its campaign products, drawing upon its policy advocacy and nutrition expertise and practical experience.

IX. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of this advocacy strategy and related action plan are in two parts:



1. Assess progress in implementing the advocacy strategy against the advocacy action plan (this amounts to tracking activities listed in the advocacy action plan).
2. Assess progress towards the expected changes defined in the advocacy strategy (e.g., new national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition adopted). This will be done using the advocacy impact reporting tool developed by the Global Nutrition Cluster, described in Table 3 below.

Given that the advocacy strategy aims for changes in policy implementation, practices, and behaviours, which are long processes, monitoring will be two-pronged: it will consider the *impact of advocacy*, or whether the expected changes have indeed taken place, and review *progress* - the significant steps towards the expected changes such as advocacy champions, commitment/buy-in, strengthened capacities, and awareness raising platforms.

Table 3: Indicators to evaluate advocacy (modified and adapted from the Global Nutrition Cluster Advocacy tool)

OBJECTIVE 1: Support the nutrition department of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to develop a national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition by September 2024		
EXPECTED CHANGES		INDICATORS
1. Policy/practice/behaviour change has taken place	Buy-in/approval of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWA&SD) for the development of a national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition A draft roadmap for national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition developed Validation and launch of the national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition	Number of consultative meetings with FMWA&SD showing commitment/approval of Hon. Minister of FMWA&SD to develop the national Guideline on women's and girls' empowerment for optimal nutrition
1. Significant steps taken towards policy/practice/behaviour change	Advocacy champions Commitment/buy-in Strengthened capacities Networks/platforms in place to raise awareness on the importance to prioritize women's and girls' nutrition	Number of champions Number of engagements on the strategy's messages Number of platforms that have picked up/promoted/disseminate content developed under the strategy
OBJECTIVE 2: Secure commitments of Federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) on inclusion of women in decision-making positions by at least 10% by 2024		
EXPECTED CHANGES		INDICATORS
2. Policy/practice/behaviour change has taken place	Improved awareness on inclusion of women in decision-making positions Commitments of MDAs to include women in decision-making positions are secured	Number of sensitizations, enlightenment, and promotional activities Number of commitments generated from relevant MDAs and key stakeholders



	Public institutions at the national level for advocacy to prioritize women's inclusion in decision-making positions are engaged	Number of capacity building initiatives to strengthen public institutions on inclusion and participation of women in decision making positions.
2. Significant steps taken towards policy/practice/behaviour change	<p>Advocacy champions</p> <p>Commitment/buy-in</p> <p>Strengthened capacities</p> <p>Networks/platforms in place to raise awareness on the importance to prioritize women's and girls' nutrition</p>	<p>Number of champions</p> <p>Number of engagements on the strategy's messages</p> <p>Number of platforms that have picked up/promoted/disseminate content developed under the strategy</p>
OBJECTIVE 3: Increase by at least 10% the number of women benefitting from public economic empowerment schemes at the national level by 2024		
EXPECTED CHANGES		INDICATORS
1. Policy/practice/behaviour change has taken place	<p>Improved awareness on the need for gender equity in the access and utilization of public economic empowerment schemes.</p> <p>Commitments secured from public economic schemes to increase gender equity in the access and utilization of public economic empowerment schemes by at least 10% at the national level by 2024.</p>	<p>Number of sensitization, enlightenment, and promotional activities</p> <p>Number of commitments generated from public economic schemes to increase gender equity in the access and utilization of public economic empowerment schemes</p>
2. Significant steps taken towards policy/practice/behaviour change	<p>Advocacy champions</p> <p>Commitment/buy-in</p> <p>Strengthened capacities</p> <p>Networks/platforms in place to raise awareness on the importance to prioritize women's and girls' nutrition</p>	<p>Number of champions</p> <p>Number of engagements on the strategy's messages</p> <p>Number of platforms that have picked up/promoted/disseminate content developed under the strategy</p>
OBJECTIVE 4: Increase awareness of professionals at the federal level on the benefits of girls staying in school beyond basic education and the impact on nutrition outcomes		
EXPECTED CHANGES		INDICATORS
1. Policy/practice/behaviour change has taken place	Increase awareness of professionals at the federal level on educational attainment of the girl child beyond the universal basic education by 2024	Number of sensitization, enlightenment and promotional activities targeting professionals
2. Significant steps taken towards policy/practice/behaviour change	<p>Advocacy champions</p> <p>Commitment/buy-in</p> <p>Strengthened capacities</p> <p>Networks/platforms in place to raise awareness on the importance of prioritizing women's and girls' nutrition</p>	<p>Number of champions</p> <p>Number of engagements on the strategy's messages</p> <p>Number of platforms that have picked up/promoted/disseminate content developed under the strategy</p>
OBJECTIVE 5: Empower women in the workplace: Secure commitments by the private sector to adopt policies to remove the barriers that women face in accessing paid employment and thriving in the workplace		



EXPECTED CHANGES		INDICATORS
1. Policy/practice/behaviour change has taken place	<p>Increase awareness to empower women in the workplace.</p> <p>Secure commitments from the private sector to adopt policies to remove barriers that women face in accessing paid employment and thriving in the workplace.</p>	<p>Number of sensitization, enlightenment, and promotional activities</p> <p>Number of commitments generated from private sectors</p>
2. Significant steps taken toward policy/practice/behavior change	<p>Advocacy champions</p> <p>Commitment/buy-in</p> <p>Strengthened capacities</p> <p>Networks/platforms in place to raise awareness of the importance to prioritize women's and girls' nutrition</p>	<p>Number of champions</p> <p>Number of engagements on the strategy's messages</p> <p>Number of platforms that have picked up/promoted/disseminate content developed under the strategy</p>

Source: The Nutrition Cluster Advocacy Strategic Framework 2016-2019