



FIRST LADIES AGAINST CANCER

FIRST LADIES AGAINST CANCER (FLAC) APPLAUDS ADOPTION OF WHO STRATEGY ON CERVICAL CANCER ELIMINATION

Abuja, August 2020: Abuja, August 2020: The adoption of the World Health Organization's Global Strategy, Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control: Accelerating the Elimination of Cervical Cancer as a Public Health Problem, represents a milestone in the fight against cancer.

WHO Member States adopted the strategy alongside other health resolutions as part of the silence procedure launched after the last World Health Assembly in May 2020. It is worthy to note that Nigeria was one of the countries that responded to this global call to action and global strategy 2020-2030, by WHO Director General, Dr Tedros in May 2018.

FLAC appreciates the value of this resolution and the strategies put in place by WHO, as it sets a common threshold of no more than four cases of cervical cancer per 100,000 women per year for all countries to work towards. This goal may seem like a tall order for us in sub-Saharan Africa; but, the strategy has also set short-term targets for us, showing us what we can achieve by 2030, on the basis of this commitment.

"These targets will bring true momentum to providing girls and women with the health care they need in order to thrive," said HRH Princess Dina Mired of Jordan, President of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC). "UICC salutes WHO's leadership in championing this cause, inspiring countries with the highest burden of cervical cancer to also commit to elimination."

Cancer of the cervix is a disease that reflects global inequity. Caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV), cervical cancer is preventable and curable. It is the fourth most common form of cancer among women worldwide, and ranks as the second most frequent cancer among women in Nigeria.

Unlike at least 12 other African countries, Nigeria is yet to introduce the HPV vaccine into our routine immunization programme. It is pertinent that the Federal and State governments match their promises with action by showing public commitment to the 2030 targets. The future of Nigerian girls and women will be bleak if we do not protect them against cervical cancer".

As chief advocates in our states, we are at the forefront of raising awareness for women and girls in Nigeria to know about cervical cancer. They must be informed about risk factors, signs and symptoms and where to go for help. We also want our community to be knowledgeable and support girls and women in prevention to maintain a healthy cervix. We stand ready to work in partnership with other

national stakeholders to ensure that these global commitments are taken forward in Nigeria.

As a group of women leaders, we call for early steps in Nigeria, to send a strong signal of the importance of cervical health to women, our communities and our economies despite the Covid-19 pandemic. We call for our government to establish a technical working group to implement an effective national cervical cancer elimination strategy and ensure that women's needs and perspectives are well represented.

As mothers, FLAC will mobilise community support and play a lead role in building knowledge and confidence in key prevention and early detection services, which will save lives every year as we work towards the elimination goal.

About US

We are a coalition of current and former Nigerian First Ladies -First Ladies Against Cancer (FLAC). It is a platform for First Ladies who are passionate about advocacy and increasing access to services for cancer prevention and treatment in Nigeria. Through our platform, we can influence policy to achieve this.

