



Communiqué: Nigeria Food Processing and Nutrition Leadership Forum
Thursday, July 26, 2018 | Lagos Continental Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos

Preamble

Malnutrition is one of the most serious global development issues holding back millions of individuals, families and countries from achieving their full potential. Nowhere in Sub-Saharan Africa is this problem more prevalent than in Nigeria, where one in three children suffers from chronic malnutrition and malnutrition is an underlying cause of over 50% of all child deaths.

Failing to address malnutrition will continue to negatively impact not only the health and wellbeing of Nigerians, but the country's economic growth and prosperity.

Fortifying oil, flour, salt and sugar with vitamins and minerals including iron, folate, iodine, zinc, and Vitamin A has been proven to be one of the most scalable, sustainable and cost-effective tools to combat malnutrition.

It is for this reason that we -- as leaders of the Nigerian food processing industry, government and development partners -- came together at the *Food Processing and Nutrition Leadership Forum* in Lagos on July 26, 2018. We reviewed available data and identified the need for urgent action to improve levels and quality of staple food fortification nationally.

To do this, we recognize the necessity to address the barriers that have historically prevented adequately fortified foods from reaching all Nigerian families. Through enhanced business operations and an improved regulatory environment, high quality and adequate fortification of staple foods has the potential to improve nutrition for 180 million Nigerians.

We believe that together as industry, government and development leaders, we have the power to achieve this goal. The commitments below reflect our strong and collective resolve towards achieving adequate fortification of our major staples by 2020. We will reconvene annually to track our progress, with a second gathering scheduled for March 2019.

Industry Commitments

We, the leading processors of flour, salt, oil and sugar in Nigeria, commit to the following:

1) Incorporating food fortification as a key performance indicator in our corporate measurement framework, with regular reporting to the CEO and board beginning this year. In each of our respective companies, we commit to putting in place or strengthening internal systems that enable us to better monitor compliance with fortification regulations. By September 2020, we would aim to achieve 100% compliance with the food fortification standards, as verified by independent, third party monitoring. Our Annual Reports would henceforth report results from independent, third party monitoring and show the progress being made towards this goal.

2) Regular reporting and review of progress at an industry-wide level to improve compliance with fortification regulations. We commit to exploring potential fora and mechanisms to convene companies to regularly review available monitoring data. By September 1, 2018, we will identify an existing or new



mechanism(s) that will serve as the primary forum for industries to exchange best practices for food fortification, and track and assess progress.

Government Commitments

The Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, on behalf of the Federal Government of Nigeria and in working towards improving the competitiveness of food processing industries, commits to the following:

- 1) **Reviewing a position paper with specific requests and policy options to address prohibitive tariffs on micronutrient premixes and clearing charges by September 2018 as a means of facilitating private sector-led food fortification through lowered operational costs.** This will be in collaboration with the Nigerian Industrial Policy and Competitiveness Council and will include a re-evaluation of products along the supply chain such as those classified as raw materials, finished products, or premix chemicals. By reducing the costs related to doing business and improving quality, specifically as it pertains to fortification, we aim to encourage companies to strengthen their commitment to innovative methods to add value to consumer products.
- 2) **Boosting enforcement of key regulations and incentivizing adherence and commitment by the food processing industry to fortification.** In collaboration with relevant government ministries, departments and agencies, this will include continuous engagement and collaboration with relevant agencies; investments in improving the capacity of those agencies to carry out their duties; and a review of certification practices related to production and importation of premixes and micronutrients required for food fortification. While we recognize the current efforts made by regulatory agencies to ensure strict compliance, we will support the establishment of a third-party scheme of certifying premix suppliers to effectively address quality issues and publish a list of certified premix suppliers by October 2018.
- 3) **Engaging relevant government agencies to discuss issues related to the importation of inadequately fortified staple foods.** In collaboration with relevant agencies and stakeholders, this will include policy reviews and actions towards ensuring that flours, edible oil, sugar and salt that come into the country meet the minimum standards for quality and food fortification. We will take measurable and concrete steps in this direction by October 2018.
- 4) **Establishing a joint regulatory framework mechanism for monitoring and enforcing food fortification regulations.** This will result in a workshop aimed at presenting the details of the framework which will be unveiled in November 2018. The framework for the joint procedures preserves the authorities and responsibilities of each agency while encouraging participating offices and agencies to integrate efforts and establish a more coordinated regulatory process. A team consisting of representatives from the 3 agencies (NAFDAC, SON, and CPC) will execute preparatory work between August and October 2018. This work will be supported by TechnoServe.

Development Partner Commitments

Recognizing the existing and potential commitments and investments by various national and international development partners towards advancing the fortification agenda in Nigeria, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in further fostering the spirit of partnership commits to the following:



The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation:

- 1) **Investing in independent, third party assessment of fortification levels** in food compared to standard requirements on an annual basis between 2018 and 2020.
- 2) **Supporting the annual meeting of leaders of industry, government and development** partners to review progress until 2020
- 3) **Continuing to support the efforts of government and industry through investments to improve the enabling environment and provide technology solutions** to ensure the competitive and sustainable production of adequately fortified foods in Nigeria
- 4) **Continuing support for the Global Fortification Data Exchange**, a coalition of partners working to ensure existing datasets on food fortification are open, accessible and used by government, industry and civil society for improved decision-making in Nigeria and globally