



SPEECH OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/ CEO NPHCDA ON THE OCCASION OF OFFICIAL RE-COMMENCEMENT OF DIRECT GAVI PROGRAMME FUNDING THROUGH NPHCDA HELD ON MAY 18th 2023

Protocols:

1. At the inception of this administration, in 2017, we set sail with four strategic objectives, which we expected would set the Agency firmly on the way to achievement of Universal Health Coverage. The strategic objectives were changing the NPHCDA narrative about accountability and transparency in management of resources, achieving polio eradication; strengthening the routine immunization (RI) system; and revitalization of PHC in Nigeria. Today's event is a celebration of the achievement of the first objective.
2. It is worthy of being celebrated because when this administration came in, the agency was at its lowest ebb, as far as accountability and transparency in operations was concerned. We started out having to handle an issue involving misuse of donor funds, which led to the new administration having to compel staff to refund funds that were disbursed for state level activities, for which there were no acceptable evidence of those activities having been carried out.
3. However, the spectre of misused Gavi funds still hung over the Agency, leading to Gavi's stoppage of direct funds disbursement to NPHCDA for programme implementation. Funds had to be disbursed through development partners for activities approved for NPHCDA to implement. This hurt the system, and apart from the fact that part of the funds went for payment of Procurement Service Charges (PSC), there were avoidable delays in the approval processes of our development partners for utilization of the funds. Some of the approval bottlenecks were due to a misalignment of the Federal Government of Nigeria and implementing partners' priorities, which did not bode well for the country's goals and aspirations.
4. Apart from ensuring that every naira of the misused funds were paid back, this administration set out to consciously improve the image of the agency through establishment of fit-for-purpose structures aimed at checkmating the then prevalent forces of impunity and total lack of accountability. The structures so established included a Grant Coordination and Compliance Office, which had the responsibility of ensuring that grants and other funding support are being appropriately utilized, in line with the objectives of their infusion into the system. All program leads had to report to the Grant Compliance and Coordinating Office (GCCO) on their activities especially as regards fund utilization.
5. We also created the office of an Advisor to the ED on Accountability and Transparency in fund utilization, with the officer in this position reporting directly to the Executive Director/CEO. The Gavi alliance has graciously taken over the responsibility for paying the remuneration of the

officer in this position, which is a welcome development as it goes a long way towards ensuring independence for this office.

6. The Gavi team will be glad to know that we have taken decisive steps to strengthen the GCCO, through an infusion of more technically sound NPHCDA staff who have also demonstrated a high level of dedication to duty and a high sense of probity in the discharge of those duties. We have no doubt that Gavi will be willing to provide the necessary support to continually build the capacity of all relevant NPHCDA staff in accountability, transparency and in the management of Government and donor funds.
7. I would like to commend the effort and support we have received from the Honourable Minister of Health, Honourable Minister of Finance, Gavi and our Development Partners. Your support has been very crucial in helping us achieve this great feat.
8. To the Management and Staff of the National Primary Healthcare Development Agency, let us continue to work hard and maintain the level of transparency and accountability we have always strive to produce.
9. To the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Federal Ministry of Health, I say Congratulations!!!.

Dr Faisal Shuaib
Executive Director/CEO