

SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY SENATOR ABUBAKAR BUKOLA SARAKI (CON), PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE LEGISLATIVE NETWORK FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE ON 24TH JULY 2017

Protocols....

1. It gives me great pleasure to be here at this occasion for the launching of the Legislative Network for Universal Health Coverage (UHC). This platform is indeed remarkable as it aims to strengthen institutional cooperation to advance legislative activities on health matters.
2. The importance of this framework cannot be overstated, as our major role as legislators is to promote the welfare of our citizens; it is on us to ensure that effective healthcare systems are available to all Nigerians. This informed the desire to draw in the cooperative efforts of both the National and State Assemblies targeted at developing health strategies that will work effectively for all. This for me is another rare opportunity for us to ensure that the legislative effort in both the National and State Assemblies are moving towards same direction.
3. I therefore, commend the respective Chairmen of the Senate and House Committees on Health for uniting with leadership of Health Committees in the States to create this Legislative Network for Universal Health Coverage with the support of the Health Governance Group of USAID.
4. As it is said, a healthy nation is a wealthy nation. In our efforts to revive the wealth of our nation, the health of our people must remain paramount. We must therefore, strive to situate our health resources to optimally serve our population.

5. As a nation, we have opted to adopt the Universal Health Coverage which seeks “to ensure that all people obtain the health services they need without suffering financial hardship when paying for them.”
6. The poor access to good healthcare in our country especially in the rural areas is a challenge we must tackle through innovative thinking and dedication. Going by a World Bank report, the state of the Nigerian health system is dysfunctional and grossly under-funded with a per capita expenditure of US\$ 9.44. Therefore, addressing the issues in financing healthcare in a sustainable manner to reach all Nigerians call for the harmonization of legislative actions at both the National and States levels.
7. While “the overall objective of this Summit is to launch a national Legislative Network on UHC, the specific objectives will enhance the knowledge base and understanding of strategies in the legislature, geared towards achieving the goals of Universal Health Coverage.
8. Finally, it is my hope that this framework will bring about the effective healthcare systems we envision for our country.
9. I wish you all success in your deliberations.
10. Thank you and God bless us all.

Sen. (Dr.) Abubakar Bukola Saraki

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.