

# SWEET MOTHER INTERNATIONAL

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## Campaign to Save African Women from Pregnancy-Related Deaths (“SAVE”)



“Evil prevails if good men [and women] do nothing” (Burke E)

### FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY (FCT), ABUJA, NIGERIA Primary Health Care Board tasks nursing mothers on breastfeeding

By Chigozie Effe

As part of its effort to promote the culture of breast feeding among nursing mothers in a way to improve the growth and health of their babies, Primary Health Care Board (PHCD) under the watch dog of its Executive Secretary, Dr. Rilwanu Mohammed has organized 2011 FCT Breastfeeding Week tagged “A Baby Show” as part of activities to commemorate the 2011 World Breast Feeding Week.

Sweet Mother International (SMI) supports this event and was represented by Mr. John Adeshina, Coordinator, Sweet Mother International Abuja, Nigeria.

Addressing journalists at the event, Rilwanu noted that breast feeding week is a global strategy which is aimed at creating awareness on the need to promote, protect and support breast feeding and FCT is marking the week with activities geared towards encouraging mothers to breast feed.

According to the health practitioner, the breast milk contains all the nutrients including large percentage of water (87%) that a baby requires for optimal growth from 0.6 months of life adding that the breastfeeding help mothers in the development of good health, decrease incidence of malnutrition, decrease cost of family expenditure, among others.

Rilwanu who advocated for maternal leave for mothers in the private sector said that the theme for this year’s celebration is focused on engaging and mobilizing youths intergenerational to work with the catchy slogan of ‘Talk to Me Breastfeeding-A 3D Experience’.

*Good Shepherd* gathered that the 3D experience aims at selling all the efforts galvanized at supporting breastfeeding over the years which hitherto had focused on basically two dimensions; time-before conception to the weaning period, and place-the home. However, the desired impact is seen in the 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension, which is communication.

The Executive Secretary maintained that communication plays an essential role in promoting and to a large extent supporting breastfeeding. His words:”Communication is an essential part of promoting, protecting and supporting breastfeeding” adding “We live in a world where individuals and communities connect across small and great distances at an instant notice through communication.”

*Good Shepherd* also learnt that the 2008 National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) indicated a significant drop in exclusive breast feeding rate from 17% in 2003 to 13% nationally but in the FCT 8%.

Not satisfied with the result, Rilwanu however noted that for FCT as well as the country to achieve a significant improvement on breast feeding “All should endeavour to support our women particularly the husbands being represented by these mothers to breastfeed and nurture their infants so as to fully maximize the benefits that result from adequate young child nutrition”.

Earlier in address, Head, PHCD, Department FCT, Dr. H. S Balarabe said that “The event we are witnessing today is one of the greatest outreach vehicles for continued promotion of breastfeeding and creates the needed opportunity for us all to renew our commitments and efforts at raising exclusive breastfeeding rates in the FCT and restoring the glory of that old and God given practice”.

Speaking with Good Shepherd WHO FCT representative, Dr. Lawrence Ohammah applauded the initiative of the Board adding that the breast milk is the best for babies as it contains all nutrient babies require to grow. He encouraged nursing mothers to make it a habit of breastfeeding their babies as that will make them stronger.

Among those present at the event were a large turnout of nursing mothers, Emir of Jihar, HRH Idris Musa, health practioners, Mr. Omoru Alex, rep. of Minister of Health, Mr. John Adeshina, Coordinator, Sweet Mother International Abuja and a host of others.

Highlight of the event saw a rendition of mothers’ breastfeeding anthem by nursing mothers and gifts presentation to well breastfed babies of the year.

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