

# **PRESS STATEMENT**

## **HEALTH SECTOR UNIONS COMBAT THE EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE ON THE 2014 WEST AFRICAN HEALTH ORGANISATION DAY**

Healthcare providers in Nigeria join their colleagues across the West African sub-region under the aegis of the West African Health Sector Unions' Network (WAHSUN) to commemorate the 27<sup>th</sup> West African Health Organisation (WAHO) Day, with the theme: *Universal Health Coverage: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities*.

Member-unions of WAHSUN in Nigeria; the National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives and the Medical and Health Workers' Union of Nigeria are committed to the attainment of better health for all. Poor working people are those who suffer from the current situation where quality healthcare delivery is not universally accessible, as the rich can buy the best of healthcare services all over the world.

Strengthening the institutions and infrastructure of public health, including the quantitative and qualitative development of human resources for health are central issues to address in the quest for Universal Health Coverage.

A major challenge for health workers and populations across the sub-region now is the spread of the Ebola Virus Disease, with its worst outbreak in history, which has already claimed almost 800 lives, including a sizeable number of members of WAHSUN unions. Member-unions in Nigeria have joined sister unions in other countries to extend solidarity to our comrades affected in Liberia.

We use this opportunity to commend the Federal Ministry of Health in Nigeria for its efforts at furthering enlightenment on the dynamics of the disease's spread, but note that there is still the need for thorough-going steps to be taken to ensure that this virulent disease does not spread into Nigeria.

MHWUN and NANNM will work together with other unions and personnel in the health sector to prevent this. We also call on all

Nigerians to take the necessary preventive steps such as ensuring good hygiene and environmental sanitation that will help put the disease at bay.

We seize this opportunity to commend the West African Health Organisation Liaison office in the Federal Ministry of Health for its networking with trade unions and civil society organisations in the overall interest of ensuring better health for Nigerians and across the West African sub-region.

United, we can defeat the Ebola Virus Disease, and determined with adequate resources being brought to be by all stakeholders and particularly the federal government, we can attain the lofty aim of Universal Health Coverage.

**Nurse AbdulRafiu Adeniji**

*Vice-Chairman WAHSUN (Nigeria)*

Wednesday July 9, 2014