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**Does the Voice of Civil Society Coalitions Influence Health Sector Reforms in Nigeria? A Case Study of Health Sector Reform Coalition of Nigeria**

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Background: The 1999 Constitution developed by the last military government in 1999 did not make provisions that guarantee Nigerians the right to health and implementation of health sector reforms in the post-military era have been constrained by lack of enabling laws/legal frameworks. This paper examines the critical advocacy roles played by civil society over a 10-year period which led to the passage and signing of Nigeria’s first comprehensive health law-the 2014 Nigeria National Health Act.

Methods: The study adopted a qualitative approach and data was collected through key informant interviews. Respondents were selected based on their membership and active participation in the core advocacy activities of the coalition. Supplementary data was collected through content analysis and review of relevant documents, including minutes of meetings among others.

Results: The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) was used to explore the role of indigenous Nigerian CSO coalitions in influencing policy change. The study showed that the coalition was formed primarily to influence and shape the processes that led to the passage by the Legislature and eventual signing of the 2014 National Health Bill into an Act by the President respectively. The coalition adopted different advocacy strategies which include; informal meetings with policy makers, legislative advocacy and participation in public hearings, mass protests, capacity building and mobilization of influential health journalists and editors, media briefings, advocacy kits, public enlightenment and sensitization, stakeholder engagements and consensus building, mobilization of influential traditional and religious leaders, among others. Coalescing around a single mission and detailed work plan with specific deliverables helped to keep the coalition focused and undistracted by opponents of the bill. Despite its loose structure, some members of the coalition constituted the core group and pillar of the coalition and committed significant time and resources towards actualizing the set goals and objectives. Although attribution of results was a sensitive issue among members, conflicts of interests and attribution problems were resolved through dialogue. Members are publicly acknowledged for the specific roles and contribution towards realizing the primary goal of the coalition and this has helped to strengthen the special bond and trust among members.

Discussion/Conclusion: The passage and signing of the National Health Act in 2014 was the result of consistent advocacy over a 10-year period by CSOs active within the Nigerian health sector. When evidence-based advocacy efforts are focused around a specific issue, collaborations can help CSOs to leverage resources to influence policy change.