

Nothing in Life Breeds Resilience like Adversity and Failure

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When I hear of the desolation in Syria, my heart goes to millions of children without access to Primary Health Care all over the world; when I hear of the inflicted injuries in Libya and the residents living in poverty in the midst of plenty, my heart goes out to the millions of poverty stricken deprived of primary health care, when I hear of the insane, primitive and criminal corruption prevalent in Africa; then I wonder if the perpetrators imagine how many lives would have been saved, if they have access to sustainable Primary Health Care? I wonder if the world should sit down idle while some depraved human beings deplete their countries resources while million cannot afford PHC?

We are here today because Providence demands that we take care of each other and that is why I will eternally be grateful and admire the medical doctors, pharmacists, public health workers, nurses, etc. These are distinguished members of Homo sapiens serving humanity without looking at personal gains. The medical doctors are committed to their Hippocratic oaths and pursue these relentlessly, fiercely defending the confidentiality of their patients; the pharmacists are daily concerned with dispensing right quality of drugs, the laboratory technologists are analyzing blood samples and associated health issues in the laboratory, the nurses are working towards making the world a better place and the dictators are scheming how to make their citizens wallow in marginalization, oppression, ill health, corruption, inhuman treatments, etc.

It is commendable the quantum leaps the world has made in the field of Medicine, Science, ICT, etc. The feat of medicine in the advanced countries of the world is indeed in scientific, revolutionary and 'trouble-shooting' in essence. The world is watching the advanced countries of the world making giant strides in Primary Health Care while in the developing countries in Africa, PHC is still a luxury. I was shocked to my bone-marrow when a woman very close to me lost a 32 weeks old pregnancy few weeks ago in Nigeria. It is bizarre and an irony! The adversity and failure in PHC in Africa and other developing countries in the world has bred resilience.

The whole world is watching this august body in September to make the world safe and the PHC available to all and sundry. It is not for semantics or love of criticism that I took up the Minister of Health in Nigeria when BBC did the coverage of how many youths are dying due to abuse of cough syrup with codeine which they are addicted to. I said in advanced countries of the world, he would have thrown in the towel, not because he is not doing a good job but because of the loss of lives. The loss of any human life is sacrilegious to the Creator. I admire all the distinguished members present here today. We must all work to make PHC available to all and sundry. It does not matter whether the patient is in Amsterdam or Lilongwe; in Paris or Nairobi, in London or Ouagadougou, In New York or Port-au-Prince, in Lisbon or Jakarta, in Frankfurt or in Dhaka.

Almost 40 years ago, the government of Nigeria sent me to study medicine in the UK but because of my phobia for blood, I changed my course to Accounting. But all of you persisted and are serving humanity. Today, I am more concerned about PHC. I am more concerned on how medicine can see how the brain can be transplanted- after death; the brain can still thrive for about three minutes. What can be done during that interval? Of course, the accountants are also in the board rooms making their impacts to the business world. Saving human lives and PHC is supreme.

Ladies and gentlemen, I appeal to each and every one of us to contribute and make Primary Health Care a much better recurring decimal in the world.

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