Professor C.O. Onyebuchi Chukwu, FWACS FICS

Christian Otu Onyebuchi Chukwu is a **former Minister of Health of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (April 2010 to October 2014).** A professor of orthopedic surgery, he has in the past nine years been a major player in global health. He was the First Vice-President of the 64th World Health Assembly; the Chairman of the Assembly of ECOWAS Health Ministers (2010 to 2011); the Chairman of World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Committee for Africa (2011); the Chairman of the Conference of African Union (AU) Ministers of Health (2013 to 2014); Board Member Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health PMNCH (2010 to 2014); and the Chairman of Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanism CCM Nigeria (2011 to 2014). During his tenure as minister of health, **Nigeria was certified guinea worm disease free by WHO**, polio **virus transmission was interrupted in the country, and an outbreak of Ebola virus disease was rapidly and effectively controlled**. It is to his credit that the **Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)** was established and he played a key role in the enactment of the **Nigerian National Health Act 2014**. Between May 2013 and May 2016 he represented West and Central Africa on the Board of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and is currently a member of its Privileges and Immunities Advisory Group.

By the time he left office as the Minister of Health, Nigeria' maternal mortality ratio had decreased from 545 per 100,000 to 350 per 100,000; under 5 child mortality had fallen from 157 per 1,000 to 94 per 1,000; infant mortality had reduced from 75 per 1,000 to 61 per 1,000 (National Bureau of Statistics 2012); and life expectancy at birth had increased from 47 years to 54 years (World Health Organization 2013).

He was the Chairman of the Planning Committee of the successful **African Union Special Summit on AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria** that took place in Abuja Nigeria in July 2013. He organized the epochal **Presidential Summit on Universal Health Coverage** in March 2014.

The campaign against **Non-Communicable Diseases** received a major boost during his tenure. The Federal Ministry of Health embarked on a nationwide campaign involving awareness creation, sensitization and early detection of **cancer.** The ministry equipped six zonal centres to offer free and mass screening for cancers of the breast, cervix and prostate and even offer treatment for premalignant and early lesions of the cervix. The Federal Government **domesticated the WHO'S**

Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and initiated a stricter bill for the control of tobacco use. The ministry piloted and introduced the **HPV vaccine** for the prevention of cervical cancer. It introduced **HBV vaccine** into the national immunization schedule as part of strategies to prevent primary liver cell carcinoma. The Minister got the president to personally flag-off the **National Stroke Prevention Programme** and had him to undergo relevant medical check-up to set the right example for Nigerians. Under Prof Chukwu's watch, the Federal Government established **six special zonal centres for the prenatal and early diagnosis of sickle cell disease and for early management of the condition.** He issued a ministerial order directing all federal hospitals to dispense **insulin free of charge to all diabetic children that required insulin.** Under his leadership, Nigeria produced its first ever **National Oral Health Policy**.

It was during his tenure that **open-heart surgeries** resumed at the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital Enugu and at the University College Hospital Ibadan; the University of Benin Teaching Hospital commenced **bone marrow transplantation** for sickle cell disease; a **National Trauma Centre** was built at the National Hospital Abuja, and curricula were produced for the training of **paramedics** and **herbal medical practitioners** respectively.

Professor Onyebuchi Chukwu is currently with the **Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu Alike, Ebonyi State.**