



NIGERIA HEALTH WATCH

Informed commentary, intelligence, and insights on the Nigerian health sector

NUTRITION ROUNDTABLE MEETING

FORTIFYING NIGERIA'S
FUTURE: STRENGTHENING
NUTRITION THROUGH
LOCAL SOLUTIONS

REPORT





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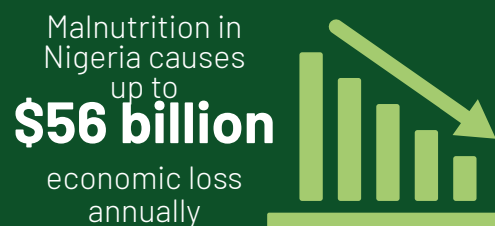
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On **Thursday, 28th August 2025**, Nigeria Health Watch convened a Nutrition Roundtable in Abuja under the theme “Fortifying Nigeria’s Future: Strengthening Nutrition Through Local Solutions” in partnership with Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and Scaling Up Nutrition in Nigeria (CS-SUNN). The dialogue brought together stakeholders from government, regulatory agencies, development partners, civil society, academia, and the private sector to address Nigeria’s persistent malnutrition crisis and chart pathways to strengthen the country’s food fortification ecosystem.

Nigeria continues to face one of the heaviest burdens of malnutrition globally, with over 30% of children under five stunted, widespread micronutrient deficiencies, and significant economic losses estimated at \$56 billion annually. While progress has been made with universal salt iodisation and mandatory fortification of key staples, enforcement gaps, high production costs, and dependence on imported premixes continue to limit the impact of these interventions.

The roundtable focused on how Nigeria can transition from reliance on imported fortification inputs toward building a resilient, locally driven system. Participants highlighted the urgent need to incentivise domestic premix production, strengthen regulatory oversight, support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), and unlock sustainable financing and innovation.

Discussions throughout the day underscored that fortification is not only a technical issue but also an economic and social imperative. Strengthening local solutions will be essential for reducing hidden hunger, improving maternal and child health, and safeguarding Nigeria’s future development.





INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's nutrition challenge remains a pressing public health and development concern. Despite decades of investment, millions of children and women continue to suffer from stunting, wasting, anaemia, and other micronutrient deficiencies that hinder growth, learning, productivity, and survival. Recent surveys and indices paint a stark picture: one in three children under five is stunted, and Nigeria ranks among the lowest globally on the 2024 Global Hunger Index.

Food fortification has proven to be one of the most cost-effective strategies to address micronutrient deficiencies. Nigeria has taken important steps, including mandatory fortification of wheat flour, sugar, and vegetable oil, and the near-universal iodisation of salt. However, weak compliance, limited enforcement, and the sector's heavy dependence on imported premixes continue to undermine these efforts. MSMEs, which form the backbone of Nigeria's food system, are particularly constrained by high input costs, limited access to financing, and inadequate quality-control systems.

The 2025 Nutrition Roundtable was designed to spark dialogue and generate actionable solutions to these challenges. Convened at the Abuja Continental Hotel, the meeting created space for reflection, learning, and collaboration across sectors.

In attendance were representatives from key government institutions including the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, NAFDAC, the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, the Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Federal Competition & Consumers Protection Commission (FCCPC), and the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), alongside development partners such as the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and Helen Keller International. Civil society groups, including the Civil Society–Scaling Up Nutrition in Nigeria (CS-SUNN) and the Consumer Advocacy for Food Safety Initiative (CAFSANI), joined voices with private sector leaders, including BNSL Limited and other industry players. This diverse mix of perspectives ensured a robust, multi-stakeholder conversation on strengthening Nigeria's fortification ecosystem.

Together, participants examined how local manufacturing capacity, regulatory innovation, and multi-sectoral partnerships can accelerate food fortification in Nigeria. Their discussions and recommendations form the basis of this report.



WELCOME REMARKS

SAFIYA SHUAIBU ISA

Deputy Director, Advocacy and Partnerships
on behalf of the Managing Director of
Nigeria Health Watch.



Nigeria's position, **110th out of 127 countries on the 2024 Global Hunger Index** underscores the urgent need for decisive action to address the country's nutrition crisis. Beyond the challenge of insufficient calories, Nigeria faces a deeper struggle with hidden hunger driven by widespread micronutrient deficiencies that silently impair growth, weaken immunity, and erode productivity across generations.

Food fortification offers one of the most cost-effective and scalable solutions to this challenge. Yet, progress remains uneven. Weak compliance with fortification standards, limited access to affordable premixes, and a heavy reliance on imported raw materials continue to constrain impact. These barriers raise production costs, stifle small and medium-scale manufacturers, and leave the nation vulnerable to global supply disruptions.

Strengthening Nigeria's food fortification landscape demands bold investment in local capacity from expanding domestic premix production to incentivising innovation among local producers. It also requires stronger enforcement mechanisms, policy coherence, and the kind of public-private collaboration that can align nutrition outcomes with national development priorities.



"This is not just about food. It is about the future of Nigeria and ensuring that every child grows, learns, and thrives; that our workforce remains strong and productive; and that our country realises its full potential."



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

LADIDI BAKO-AIYEBUSI, MNI

Director, Department of Nutrition,
Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

on behalf of

DAJU, KACHOLLOM S., MNI

Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of
Health and Social Welfare

"FRAMING NIGERIA'S COMMITMENT TO FOOD FORTIFICATION AND LOCAL PRODUCTION"



Nigeria stands at a defining moment in its nutrition journey. The nation is contending with a triple burden of malnutrition, undernutrition, overnutrition, and hidden hunger driven by widespread micronutrient deficiencies. National surveys reveal a sobering picture: 40% of children under five are stunted, 27% are underweight, and nearly half of women of reproductive age are anaemic. These figures reflect not just a health crisis but a development challenge that inflation, conflict, and climate shocks continue to deepen.

Food fortification remains one of the most effective and affordable public-health strategies to close this gap. Nigeria has recorded progress with near-universal salt iodisation and the fortification of staple foods such as wheat flour, sugar, and vegetable oil. Yet, compliance remains uneven particularly among micro, small, and medium-sized

enterprises (MSMEs) due to weak enforcement, limited access to affordable premixes, and the high cost of imported raw materials. These constraints not only drive-up prices but also undermine confidence in the fortification system.

To deliver on Nigeria's nutrition targets, local capacity must be strengthened. This means expanding domestic premix production, introducing incentives that make compliance viable for MSMEs, and leveraging technology including digital traceability systems to monitor fortification quality in real time. The Federal Government is also advancing new food-vehicle innovations, such as fortified rice and bouillon cubes, alongside salt-reduction strategies and harmonised social-and-behaviour-change communication campaigns that can shift consumer demand.



The Ministry reaffirmed five concrete government commitments to accelerate progress:

- 1 Strengthen regulatory frameworks to guarantee full compliance with fortification standards.
- 2 Support local production through fiscal incentives, technology transfer, logistics support, and access to quality-management tools.
- 3 Improve monitoring and evaluation systems to generate reliable data for evidence-based policymaking.
- 4 Foster robust public-private partnerships that promote innovation, sustainability, and accountability.
- 5 Deepen community engagement to drive consumer awareness and stimulate demand for fortified products.



“Fortification is not just a health intervention; it is an economic and social investment. A well-nourished population is more productive, innovative, and better positioned to drive national development.”





PRESENTATION:

ADDRESSING THE FORTIFICATION GAP: STRENGTHENING LOCAL SYSTEMS TO SCALE IMPACT AND SAVE LIVES

MRS. UMMULKHAIRE BOBBOI

Deputy Director for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition at NAFDAC, on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.



NIGERIA'S NUTRITION SITUATION

Nigeria's nutrition crisis remains one of the most significant public health challenges of our time. The 2021 National Food Consumption and Micronutrient Survey reveals stark realities: one in three children is vitamin A deficient, over a third lack adequate zinc, and two in ten face iron deficiency. Nearly half of women of reproductive age suffer from anaemia. These are not abstract statistics they represent an ongoing erosion of human potential and economic productivity.

WHY FOOD FORTIFICATION MATTERS

Food fortification offers one of the fastest, most scalable solutions to reverse this trend.

Mandatory fortification of salt, flour, oil, and sugar has saved lives, improved health outcomes, and reduced healthcare costs. Yet, progress has plateaued. The current fortification system is constrained by imported inputs, weak laboratory systems, and low public awareness. Many small and medium enterprises find it difficult to afford high-quality premixes, while low consumer awareness about the benefits of fortification limits demand for fortified foods. The result is a fragmented value chain where compliance is inconsistent and impact diluted.



FORTIFICATION GAPS

Despite progress, several systemic challenges persist:

01. LIMITED LOCAL CAPACITY:

Few domestic premix producers and insufficiently equipped laboratories. Independent analysts lack the technical capacity to reliably assess fortification levels.

02. DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTS:

Heavy reliance on imported premixes inflates costs, exposes Nigeria to forex volatility, and delays supply through port clearance bottlenecks.

03. HIGH PRODUCTION COSTS:

MSMEs struggle to afford quality premixes, making fortified foods more expensive for consumers.

04. WEAK STORAGE AND SUPPLY CHAINS:

Harsh conditions and poor handling degrade micronutrient quality.

05. LOW CONSUMER AWARENESS:

Many Nigerians are not adequately informed about the benefits of fortified foods, limiting demand.

To unlock the full potential of fortification, Nigeria must shift from dependency to domestic self-sufficiency. Strengthening local production of premixes is not only a public health priority but also an economic opportunity to build resilience, create jobs, and safeguard national supply chains.

CALL TO ACTION

“Fortifying Nigeria’s future means fortifying our children, our economy, and our national resilience. By strengthening local systems, we can close fortification gaps, save lives, and secure Nigeria’s future.”

- Government should strengthen regulation, incentivise local premix production, and expand laboratory capacity, including establishing a national reference lab.
- Private sector must invest in local premix manufacturing and ensure compliance with standards.
- Academia and research institutes should develop homegrown raw materials for premix production and assess the public health impact of fortification programmes.
- Civil society and NGOs should drive advocacy, social marketing, and public awareness campaigns.
- Development partners are needed to provide technical expertise, innovation, and financing support.



DISCUSSIONS

STRENGTHENING NIGERIA'S FOOD FORTIFICATION ECOSYSTEM

The initial plenary discussion session examined the barriers preventing stronger compliance with fortification standards and the systemic challenges facing local premix production. The conversation featured insights from regulators, trade representatives, development partners, and industry stakeholders, and was moderated by Ridwan Awosanya, Programme Manager at CS-SUNN, Nigeria.



KEY THEMES EXPLORED INCLUDED:

Regulatory bottlenecks and enforcement gaps as identified by MSMEs, and how improved coordination among agencies like NAFDAC, SON, and FCCPC can drive compliance.

Opportunities to scale local premix production, reduce dependency on imports, and improve accessibility for domestic manufacturers.

Practical policy models that respond to MSME-identified barriers such as the cost of premixes, fortification equipment, and energy supply.

Collaborative solutions from the ground up, co-developed by participants in response to real-world challenges experienced by MSMEs in different regions of the country.



DISCUSSION PART I

STRENGTHENING NIGERIA'S FOOD FORTIFICATION ECOSYSTEM:

BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES TO LOCAL PRODUCTION OF PREMIXES IN NIGERIA'S FOOD FORTIFICATION EFFORTS

The roundtable explored the persistent barriers limiting compliance with food fortification standards and the structural challenges constraining local premix production. Stakeholders from regulatory bodies, industry, development partners, and trade associations engaged in a robust dialogue on actionable solutions.



REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

Weak enforcement among MSMEs remains a critical concern in Nigeria's fortification landscape. While regulatory frameworks exist and agencies like NAFDAC allocate dedicated budgets for monitoring, conduct annual sampling, and collaborate inter-agency, producers struggle more with inconsistent premix quality and availability than with oversight. Without reliable premix inputs, even compliant manufacturers cannot meet fortification standards consistently.

Standards must reflect market realities to drive compliance. SON positions its regulations as dynamic tools, adjusting requirements to evolving conditions. Beyond enforcement, SON supports SMEs by subsidizing standards by 50% and allowing provisional certification for new

products. Yet, the market continues to face significant variability in fortificant quality and bioavailability, creating persistent challenges for manufacturers striving to meet regulatory expectations.

"Strengthening Nigeria's food fortification ecosystem requires more than policies, it needs active engagement. The government has created incentives to facilitate fortified food production. But producers must engage, seek support and utilise these opportunities."



DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTS VS. LOCAL PRODUCTION

Nigeria's heavy reliance on imported premixes undermines local blenders, forcing them to source raw materials abroad before production. Imported products often outcompete local producers on price, creating an uneven market. Strengthening domestic blending capacity, however, promises long-term sustainability, job creation, and resilience against global supply shocks.

Participants emphasised the urgency of investing in local production infrastructure. Expanding domestic capacity would mitigate vulnerabilities linked to foreign exchange fluctuations and supply chain disruptions, while ensuring a more stable fortification ecosystem.



"Sustainability lies in building from within. When Nigeria strengthens local blending capacity, it protects jobs, stabilises prices, and insulates its people from external shocks. Dependence on imports might fill a gap today, but local production secures the nation's nutrition future."



INNOVATION AND MONITORING SYSTEMS

Emerging digital tools are transforming accountability in fortification. The Digital Fortification Quality and Traceability Plus (DFQT+) platform allows producers to upload fortification data, enabling regulators to conduct risk-based monitoring in real time. Early results highlight the platform's effectiveness in pinpointing gaps across production from premix quality to processing and market distribution.

DFQT+ has strengthened trust between regulators and producers, yet adoption remains limited. Scaling the platform and securing stronger government backing emerged as critical priorities to embed it nationwide and fully leverage its potential.



"The DFQT+ platform is already helping us trace fortification gaps in real time, from the premix to the market shelf. It builds trust between regulators and producers, but to truly deliver its value, we need more manufacturers to come on board and make digital monitoring the new standard."





LABORATORY AND TESTING CAPACITY GAPS

Nigeria's laboratory infrastructure struggles to keep pace with the demands of food fortification. Many in-house and third-party labs lack the technical capability to deliver reliable results, particularly for bouillon fortification. Inconsistent testing erodes confidence in compliance data and delays product rollout, as critical R&D and shelf-life studies often rely on outsourced facilities. Strengthening national reference laboratories and building capacity among independent analysts emerged as urgent priorities to ensure accurate, timely, and credible testing.



"Strengthening local premix production, investing in laboratory capacity, and supporting SMEs are critical to scaling food fortification and ensuring Nigerians have access to safe, nutritious, and affordable foods"



MSME CHALLENGES AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

MSMEs, which dominate Nigeria's food processing sector, face unique pressures. Many small businesses lack awareness of fortification requirements and perceive compliance as an additional burden amid survival challenges. Targeted incentives and sensitisation campaigns are essential to drive participation.

The government maintains that mandatory fortification requirements remain non-negotiable. While support mechanisms exist to cushion the burden on smaller producers, active engagement with regulatory channels is critical. Voluntary fortification continues to follow a gradual approach, but the ultimate goal is full compliance across all mandated food vehicles. Producers must recognise that the current administration is enforcing regulations while simultaneously offering support, creating a path for both compliance and growth.



"If you are in the business of producing food vehicles that have been declared mandatory for fortification, then you have no option. The current government is walking its talk, and support mechanisms are available, but producers must also come forward to engage."





EMERGING INSIGHTS FROM DISCUSSION SESSION I

- Compliance gaps stem primarily from premix quality, availability, and affordability, not just weak regulatory enforcement
- Nigeria's over-reliance on imported premixes undermines local producers, fuels price volatility, and weakens resilience
- The DFQT+ digital platform is a promising innovation for real-time monitoring and accountability, but wider adoption across industry is needed
- Laboratory capacity is inadequate, with inconsistent testing results that limit regulatory confidence and delay product innovation
- MSMEs face financial and operational constraints, requiring targeted incentives and stronger awareness campaigns. However, government reaffirmed that mandatory fortification standards remain non-negotiable



VOICES FROM THE ROOM & VIRTUAL SPACE

Beyond the plenary contributions, participants in the room and online enriched the discussion with lived experiences, cautionary reflections, and pragmatic solutions. Their comments highlighted both persistent barriers and opportunities for strengthening Nigeria's food fortification ecosystem.

1. MSME Awareness and Capacity Building

- Beyond the plenary contributions, participants in the room and online enriched the discussion with lived experiences, cautionary reflections, and pragmatic solutions. Their comments highlighted both persistent barriers and opportunities for strengthening Nigeria's food fortification ecosystem.



2. Local Premix Production vs. Import Dependence

- Local producers emphasised the competitive disadvantage they face against bigger multinational companies who are more capable of shouldering the costs of imported premixes. They called for deliberate government action through tariff adjustments, preferential policies, or stricter enforcement to level the playing field and encourage sustainability.
- However, others cautioned against a blanket tariff increase. A more nuanced policy approach was suggested, such as targeted import quotas, tariff reductions on critical inputs, and balanced incentives to both protect local producers and ensure supply adequacy for large-scale industries.

3. Laboratory & Testing Gaps

- Participants raised concerns about the inadequate laboratory infrastructure and capacity to reliably test micronutrient levels in premixes and fortified foods.
- Inconsistent results from third-party labs undermine trust, with examples where “garbage in, garbage out” undermined fortification quality.
- Investments in national and in-house laboratory capabilities, as well as adoption of accelerated shelf-life testing methods, were identified as critical to strengthening compliance.

4. Evidence-Based Policy and Standards

- The importance of data-driven policy adjustments was underscored. For example, testing both local and imported premixes under identical conditions to establish quality comparability would strengthen confidence in local suppliers.
- A strong call was made to review the wheat flour premix standard, which currently requires nine micronutrient constituents. Experts argued this formulation is not cost-effective and risks non-compliance by both local and international suppliers.



5. Structural Realities of Large-Scale vs. Disaggregated Industries

- Virtual contributions reminded the group that large-scale fortification strategies are by design tailored to consolidated industries like wheat and sugar. By contrast, edible oil production is highly fragmented, requiring differentiated, sector-specific solutions rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Risk-based monitoring was proposed with regulators focusing their limited resources on MSMEs with weak systems, while applying lighter oversight to well-established large processors already committed to fortification compliance.

6. Incentives, Policy Support, and Government Commitments

- While some participants felt government incentives were poorly communicated or underutilised, government representatives reaffirmed that numerous fiscal incentives exist, including corporate tax holidays, R&D tax deductions, VAT exemptions, and low-interest loans.
- The call was made for greater transparency and awareness of these opportunities, alongside stronger accountability for both government and industry in building local capacity after more than 20 years of fortification programming.

7. Call for Multisector Engagement

- Finally, participants pointed out missing voices in the discussion such as Customs and the Biotechnology Research Agency whose involvement would be critical in addressing import tariffs, quality control, and research for local premix development.



DISCUSSION PART II

STRENGTHENING NIGERIA'S FOOD FORTIFICATION ECOSYSTEM:

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING LOCAL PRODUCTION OF PREMIXES

**Moderated by
SAFIYA SHUAIBU ISA**

Deputy Director of Advocacy and Partnerships
Nigeria Health Watch



The second plenary session examined ways to strengthen local premix production in Nigeria through supportive policies, incentives, and strategic partnerships, while balancing emerging opportunities with on-the-ground realities.



GOVERNMENT'S ROLE AND INCENTIVES

The government's primary responsibility lies in creating an enabling environment for private sector investment rather than direct co-investment in manufacturing. Policies that support backward integration, offer tariff concessions for unavailable raw materials, and provide tax holidays can lower production costs and make local premix production viable. Some state governments, including Cross River, already own dormant pharmaceutical facilities that could be

revitalised through public-private partnerships to produce premixes.

Incentives emerged as critical to attracting investors. Single-digit interest loans, reduced tariffs on essential raw materials, and expanded tax deductions would help local producers manage the significant infrastructure and laboratory costs that currently hinder scale-up. Participants emphasised that a robust incentive framework would not only strengthen local production capacity but also enhance long-term sustainability, job creation, and resilience in Nigeria's fortification ecosystem.



“Government’s role is not to co-invest but to create the conditions for private sector innovation from backward integration policies to tariff concessions that make local production viable.”



PRIVATE SECTOR PERSPECTIVES

Private sector actors welcomed the government’s incentives but pushed for bolder policies that guarantee market access. One strong recommendation was the introduction of local content quotas, requiring that a percentage (e.g., 40–50%) of premix used by food manufacturers be sourced from indigenous producers. Local manufacturers argued that without such mandates, multinational suppliers with access to foreign exchange and global networks dominate the market, leaving domestic firms at a disadvantage.

The debate underscored tensions between multinationals such as DSM-Firmenich and local firms like Bio Organics Nutrients Systems, BNSL Ltd. While DSM highlighted its investments in Nigeria and Africa including fortified rice kernel production, local producers argued that DSM’s global advantages allowed it to undercut Nigerian businesses. They insisted that government protection and clear policy enforcement are necessary to ensure indigenous players survive and expand.



“The market is large, the opportunities are vast, but investors need assurance that the environment rewards long-term commitment. Incentives, accessible financing, and reliable infrastructure will turn intent into impact.”



IMPORT DEPENDENCE VS. LOCAL CAPACITY

Achieving full self-sufficiency in premix production remains a long-term challenge. Nigeria currently lacks the raw materials and advanced technology to manufacture certain specialised micronutrients, including vitamin A resources that even Europe sources from just two global suppliers.

To navigate these constraints, stakeholders proposed import quotas rather than blanket tariff increases. This approach balances immediate availability with gradual expansion of local capacity. Participants also called for stricter enforcement of Executive Order 003, which mandates local procurement wherever capacity exists, to ensure the premix sector benefits from the policy’s full intent.



“We can’t continue to depend entirely on imports. When local producers blend and add value here, we build jobs, resilience, and national capacity. The right policy signals would turn that intent into real industry growth.”



REGULATORY AND COMPLIANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Regulatory agencies play a critical role in calibration, testing, certification, and enforcement of fortification standards. Partnerships with the private sector, particularly in laboratory services and equipment calibration, could strengthen compliance monitoring and improve data reliability.

Risk-based monitoring emerged as a key strategy to maximize regulatory impact. Larger, well-capitalised millers could undergo lighter scrutiny, allowing regulators to focus scarce resources on MSMEs, where compliance challenges are most acute. This targeted approach ensures accountability while fostering growth in a sector dominated by smaller players.



“Regulation should not only police, but it should also enable. When standards evolve with market realities and regulators work hand-in-hand with producers, compliance becomes achievable, not punitive.”



RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Stakeholders emphasised urgent investment in research and development to build Nigeria’s technical capacity. Gaps in laboratory infrastructure, inconsistent testing, and weak product development systems leave the country dependent on imported premixes. Without deliberate R&D collaboration, local producers risk perpetuating reliance on foreign suppliers.

Participants called for systematic engagement with academia and agricultural research institutions to contribute evidence and innovation to the fortification agenda. Strengthened knowledge transfer from multinationals operating in Nigeria was also highlighted as critical to accelerate domestic expertise and reduce long-term dependence on imports.



“The future of fortification in Nigeria depends on what we build not just what we import. Knowledge transfer, local R&D, and strong partnerships must anchor our progress.”



CONSUMER AWARENESS AND DEMAND CREATION

Low public understanding of fortification undermines demand and, by extension, manufacturer compliance. Stakeholders argued that targeted consumer education can drive uptake of fortified products, mirroring successful campaigns in immunisation and HIV awareness. The Ministry of Health confirmed that a national communication campaign for large-scale food fortification is imminent, with messaging designed to boost consumer demand and encourage widespread adoption of fortified foods.



“When consumers value fortification, they demand it and when demand rises, industry follows. Awareness isn’t an afterthought, but it is the engine that sustains compliance.”



STRENGTHENING COORDINATION

The discussions highlighted a need to strengthen national coordination mechanisms. While the National Fortification Alliance exists and meets twice a year, its reporting lines and mandate have not always been clear. The revision of the National Guideline on Micronutrient Deficiency Prevention and Control (due in 2025) offers an opportunity to reconstitute advisory committees, clarify roles across ministries and agencies, and ensure academia, private sector, and civil society are fully integrated into the governance structure.



“Coordination is not just about structure, but it is about synergy. Every actor in the fortification chain, from regulators to millers to communicators, must move in one direction if we are to achieve scale and sustainability.”



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Government's role is to create an enabling policy and incentive environment, not to directly co-invest, though states may explore Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) models.
- Local manufacturers called for binding local content quotas to protect indigenous firms from being crowded out by multinationals.
- Nigeria remains import-dependent for certain micronutrients, making balanced policies like import quotas and targeted tariff relief essential.
- Strengthening laboratory infrastructure, R&D, and knowledge transfer is crucial for building long-term domestic capacity.
- Consumer awareness campaigns are urgently needed to drive demand for fortified foods.
- National coordination platforms must be restructured to ensure clear mandates, stronger oversight, and inclusive participation.

In summary, the meeting revealed both optimism and realism that while Nigeria is not yet fully positioned to manufacture all premix inputs locally, deliberate incentives, stronger regulation, robust R&D, and coordinated advocacy can lay the foundation for sustainable local production and improved compliance with fortification standards.



RECAP & CLOSING REMARKS-

Adetola Otunla

Acting Project Manager for Large-Scale Food Fortification, GAIN



The roundtable concluded by reflecting on the key challenges, insights, and commitments surfaced during the sessions.

The discussions proved highly productive, despite the relatively small group, with active participation from government directors and industry leaders who engaged candidly on both challenges and solutions. The challenges identified were reframed as opportunities for innovation and collaboration, in line with the roundtable's theme, Fortifying Nigeria's Future. Fortification should be made "sexy," highlighting not only health benefits but also economic gains, reducing healthcare costs and enhancing workforce productivity.

The roundtable outcomes set the stage for sustained action. Commitments from participants will drive follow-up initiatives, coordinated advocacy, and partnerships, all aimed at achieving full fortification coverage across Nigeria.

"There is simply no reason Nigerians should miss out on the benefits of fortified foods. This reality demands urgent collective action."



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The discussions generated a set of actionable recommendations, which can be grouped under five broad themes:

1. Policy & Regulatory Environment

- Enforce local content policies, such as quotas requiring 40–50% of premix to be sourced from indigenous producers where feasible.
- Ensure strict adherence to Executive Order 003 (preference for locally produced goods) in the premix and fortification sector.
- Clarify mandates and strengthen reporting lines within fortification governance structures (e.g., National Fortification Alliance, MNDC Advisory Committee), leveraging the upcoming revision of the National Guideline on Micronutrient Deficiency Prevention and Control as an opportunity to institutionalize these improvements.
- Ensure risk-based regulation, focusing enforcement where compliance challenges are highest.

2. Financing & Incentives

- Introduce tax holidays, tariff waivers, and single-digit loans to lower production costs for local manufacturers.
- Provide targeted import quotas (rather than across-the-board tariff increases) to balance local capacity with essential imports.
- Explore public-private partnerships (PPPs) at state level (e.g., leveraging state-owned pharmaceutical companies).

3. Implementation & Industry Capacity

- Strengthen laboratory infrastructure, calibration, and testing facilities, with opportunities for private sector participation.



- Facilitate knowledge transfer from multinational firms to build local expertise.
- Support the establishment of premix production facilities through capacity-building, infrastructure support, and compliance enforcement.

4. Research & Development (R&D)

- Increase investment in R&D for premix formulation and quality assurance, with collaboration between government, industry, and academia.
- Engage universities, agricultural research councils, and technical institutes to drive innovation in food fortification.
- Develop a national product development platform to bridge gaps between research, industry, and policy.

5. Awareness & Advocacy

- Launch a national consumer awareness campaign to increase demand for fortified foods, with emphasis on both health and economic benefits.
- Reframe fortification as an economic and development priority, not just a health intervention.
- Strengthen multi-sector advocacy to ensure nutrition remains high on the political agenda.



CONCLUSION

The roundtable reaffirmed Nigeria's progress and potential in large-scale food fortification but also laid bare the persistent gaps in cost, capacity, compliance, and awareness. Moving forward, fortification must be pursued not only as a health intervention but also as a strategic investment in Nigeria's economic and social future. With strengthened policies, financing, R&D, consumer engagement, and coordination, Nigeria is well positioned to take a decisive leap toward full fortification coverage.





**2 Anthony Enahoro Street,
Utako, Abuja,
Federal Capital Territory.**

 **@nigeriahealthwatch**
www.nigeriahealthwatch.com