As Nigeria joined the rest of the world to mark this year’s World Physiotherapy Day on September 8, members of the Nigerian Society of Physiotherapy (NSP) have called on the Federal Government to declare a state of emergency on the practice of physiotherapy in the country and create a Directorate of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation in the Federal Ministry of Health, as a way of boosting decision and policy making regarding physiotherapy and medical rehabilitation issues in the country.

The Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy (NSP), founded in 1959, is the national professional body representing physiotherapists trained around the world practicing in Nigeria. The Society has chapters in all states of the Federation and is a member of the World Confederation of Physical Therapy (WCPT). The NSP shares in the principle of WCPT that every individual is entitled to the highest possible standard of culturally appropriate healthcare provided in an atmosphere of trust and respect for dignity.

The National President of the NSP, Mr Taiwo Oyewumi made the call during a Press Conference at the Federal Medical Centre, FMC, Lokoja to commemorate this Year’s celebration World Physiotherapy Day on Tuesday, 8th of September. He said the nation required over 42,000 physiotherapists to manage the nation’s health system which he described as old fashioned and lack adequate professional personnel across the country.

Oyewumi described physiotherapists as professionals trained to help promote and sustain healthy long life just as he frowned at government’s neglect and blamed many premature death of Nigerians on government’s inability to provide modern physiotherapy equipment and shortage of trained personnel across the country.

“As against the 42,000 physiotherapists required to cater for the country, only about 4,000 physiotherapists are registered and certified and we currently have about 1,000 physiotherapists gainfully employed, the rest are working outside the country, this to us, is a state of emergency,” stated Oyewumi. “Physiotherapists are very essential to all professions or field as they work in the academic settings, sporting environments, primary health care centre, military among others. “Our members are ready to drive medical tourism in Nigeria if more physiotherapists are employed and right equipment is
provided and we believe this will impact positively on the health status of Nigerians and save a lot of monies spent on medical expenses outside Nigeria”

“There is need for a Directorate of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation in the Federal Ministry of Health that will boost decision and policy making regarding physiotherapy and medical rehabilitation issues, with this we implore government at all levels as matter of urgency to relate with NSP on setting up a world model rehabilitation centers in the six-geopolitical zones in the country,” the NSP president said.

In his speech, Oyewumi said the message for this year World Physiotherapy Day is “Fulfilling Potential”. He further emphasized that Physical therapists have a key role in helping people with long-term conditions achieve their goals, fulfil their potential and participate fully in society, stating that this is the message that thousands of physiotherapists (known in some countries as physical therapists) are sending out on World Physical Therapy Day, a day which provides an opportunity for physical therapists around the world to raise the profile of the profession, and highlight its contribution to global health.

"Many people with long-term health conditions or disabilities lead fulfilled lives. But some do not because they do not receive the right kind of support. This can be devastating to individuals and this waste of potential also has a cost to others: families, communities and societies".

LOCAL CHAPTERS REPORTS

Most of the State Chapters of the NSP organized special lectures to mark the day. Some also conducted free health screening for the members of the public.