Oct 29, 2009 - Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babatunde Fashola (SAN) on Thursday asserted that there is now a greater need for the inputs of physiotherapists to tackle the problem of obesity, stress, diabetes and stroke which have become more pronounced with the mass exodus of people to the cities.

The Governor who spoke at 49th Annual Scientific Conference/Annual General Meeting with the Theme- 50 Years of Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy: Changing the Culture, Making a Difference held at the Banquet Hall of the National Arts Theatre, Iganmu, explained that many Nigerians have lifestyles which encouraged them to live sedentary lives as people now no longer exercise their bodies and do not even know what is healthy to eat in terms of diet.

He added that one of the main decisions which the present administration in Lagos has undertaken to assist people live healthy is to ensure that all roads being constructed come with a side walk or a pedestrian walk way, adding that this separate pedestrians from motorists.

He charged the regulators of the practice of Physiotherapy in the country to consider the formalization of the operations of unorthodox health practitioners who specialize in massaging, bone healing and bone setting as a viable step towards boosting the dwindling ranks of Physiotherapists in the country.

Governor Fashola added that a formalization of the practice of the practitioners who have also acquired skills can create an alternative while also building awareness about the true potentials and value of the profession of Physiotherapy.

While acknowledging that Physiotherapy plays a very significant role in the healthcare delivery of any nation, Governor Fashola noted that in the field of sports, a physiotherapist usually makes a difference about whether a sportsman is fit to participate in a competition or not.

The Governor commended the focus of the association on change, reminding that the enormous power which the practitioners have also imposes enormous responsibilities.

He said with the emphasis of the state Government on diagnostic healthcare, free screening exercises were carried out on diabetes and hypertension for the people, informing that during the exercise it was discovered that many people were ignorant about causative factors of such diseases.

The Lagos State Governor while emphasizing the importance of the role of Physiotherapy practitioners in the country, charged that if the country must progress healthcare wise, it must provide the power of scientific diagnosis to help in the early detection of diseases and aid provision of healthcare.

The Governor said Lagos has the most contemporary diagnostic centre in the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH) which has recently played host to him and a cabinet member for treatment.

He reiterated that the State Government invested in the facilities and would continue to do same and make it work for the people and providing a conducive atmosphere for investment locally.

Said he: “Our primary role is to provide a conducive environment for investment. Our readiness to expand this partnership is limitless. Trust is an essential ingredient in driving cultural change. We will encourage people to come home and invest. In years to come our philosophy would be Nigerians have the opportunity to invest by creating truly Nigerian enterprises”.

In his welcome address, the President of the Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy, Reverend Adeoluwa Jayesinmi said the practice of Physiotherapy has been the most affected by brain drain as the country cannot boast of more than 800 practitioners presently to 140 million people.

He added that there is a need to reevaluate the Physiotherapy aspect of healthcare delivery in the country and to ensure a qualitative change so as to bring it in tune with the hopes and aspirations of the good people of Nigeria.

He added that the celebration of the golden jubilee of any society is a great event in the history of that society which calls for introspection of

reviewing the past and planning for the future.

Also speaking, the Chairman of the Lagos State chapter of the Nigerian Society of Physiotherapy, Mrs Aderonke Eko said with the theme of the 49th Annual Scientific Conference which is 'Changing the Culture, Making a Difference', the practitioners hope to impact on the Nigerian society and make a change.

He described the Lagos State Governor as a great change agent and one of the greatest change agents in Africa who is challenging for global attention.

An award of Excellence in Leadership was later presented to Governor Fashola by Professor Gabriel Odiah, while the Governor also presented awards to the oldest physiotherapist couple who was represented by Mrs Ajao and Dr Abayomi Oshin who was described as the great grandfather of the profession among others.

Source: **Website of the Lagos State Governor**

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