



Communique of the 3rd Kenya Social Protection Conference: Accelerating an Inclusive and Integrated Social Protection System in Kenya: Strategies for Expansion of Coverage and Improved Shock Responsiveness Held from 3rd - 6th April 2023 at the Kenya School of Government, Lower Kabete Nairobi, Kenya

Preamble

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection State Department for Social Protection and Senior Citizen Affairs jointly organized the 3rd Kenya Social Protection Conference under the Theme: *Accelerating an Inclusive and Integrated Social Protection System in Kenya: Strategies for Expansion of Coverage and Improved Shock Responsiveness*. This conference comes after a successful 2nd Kenya Social Protection Conference that was held in 2018 themed *"Scaling Up Investment in Social Protection for the Delivery of Kenya's Vision 2030 and Achievement of SDGs"* that sought to create an opportunity for learning and sharing of experiences amongst various social protection actors with a view to stimulating, motivating, promoting and advocating for increased investment in social protection by all actors, at all levels in a coherent and coordinated manner.

This conference is therefore a follow up that is aimed at charting a way forward towards inclusion and expansion of social protection for all Kenyans based on the lessons learnt from actions informed by previous conferences. Further, the conference provides an opportunity for the sector players to advance a social protection agenda with a view to ensuring increased coverage and access as well as strengthening adequacy of social protection in the country and achieving greater shock responsiveness. By providing social protection that is inclusive, vulnerable and minority groups (e.g. migrants, refugees, unemployed persons and those in the informal sector) will be cushioned from poverty, social exclusion and deprivation throughout the life cycle. The conference anchored its discussions and deliberations on the following subthemes: 1. *Legal and policy frameworks on increased social protection in Kenya*, 2. *Strategies to accelerate inclusion and integrated social protection systems*, 3. *Towards responsive social protection in shocks and emergencies*, 4. *Financing social protection*, 5. *Dynamics of the social protection sector in the era of evolving technology*, 6. *Synergy and coordination for complementarity programs in social protection* and 7. *Research and learning: strategies for increased coverage*

The conference was graced by the presence of His Excellency, Dr. William Samoei Ruto, **President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander in Chief of the Defence Forces** who in his speech as the Chief Guest enumerated the various programmes and initiatives the government of Kenya has put in place in its pursuit of delivering social protection that leaves no one behind. He **REITERATED** in his speech that his government under the Kenya Kwanza Manifesto Bottom Up Economic Transformation Agenda 2022 - 2027 strongly believes in investing in the people found at the bottom of the pyramid. In his government's manifesto he **REAFFIRMED** the commitment of the government in providing a level playing field for all Kenyans whether big or small to participate economically in development. He **EMPHASIZED** that bottom up economics means reforming the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) and National Social Security Fund (NSSF) to the level where all Kenyans in terms of health and old age security will have access to and afford the cost of these contributions without exclusion and



criminalization of livelihoods including cover for those in the informal sector. Some of the highlights in his speech included: social cash transfers for the vulnerable under the National Safety Net Programme will be prioritized over public servants salaries starting 1st June 2023; that Kenyans now contribute 6% of their income towards retirement to eliminate old age poverty and promote savings for future needs; that under the Universal Health care programme, individuals can retain their NHIF cover; that 100,000 community health workers will receive a stipend; and that the national government will match funds of county governments that commit to providing school feeding programmes in order to increase access to food for children attending school. He further made and signed a **COMMITMENT** on behalf of his government to increase the coverage of social protection beneficiaries from the current 1.2 Million covered under the National Safety Net Programme to 2.5 Million. His Excellency further emphasized the importance of expediting the passage of the revised Social Protection Policy and encouraged his government to realize the creation of a Social Protection Fund.

In her remarks the **Cabinet Secretary Labour and Social Protection Hon. Florence Bore WELCOMED** all the delegates, speakers and partners to the 3rd Conference on Social Protection which seeks to promote shared experiences and learning for social protection programming and implementation. She **EMPHASIZED** the need to have at the core of the discussions the principle of a more inclusive society where no one is left behind. She **REITERATED** the need to consider promoting the scale up of interventions that increase coverage and improve shock responsiveness.

She also made an **APPEAL** to the government to consider increasing budget allocation to social protection programmes that will support a more comprehensive and inclusive coverage that will reach many citizens as a matter of priority.

She **APPRECIATED AND STRESSED** the need for establishing and strengthening of proactive partnerships that will and have supported the Ministry through Legislative agenda reforms, provision of technical assistance, financing, and implementation of targeted programmes. She **CHALLENGED** all delegates to remember that contribution to social protection begins with helping one person at a time and always starting with the person next to you.

In her keynote pitch, Dr. Keetie Roulen **NOTED** social protection has become integral to public policy in the world and Africa is no exception. She **UNDERScoreD** that these social protection schemes are very important for cushioning the effects of poverty and enabling the poor to tap into the economic opportunities. Indeed Kenya has played a pioneering role in social assistance in the region. She also **LAUDED** Kenya's significant stride in ensuring that about 80% of social protection spending is funded through government resources.

She however noted that despite the positive gains, the level of funding of social protection is not keeping pace with economic growth. For instance, she **POINTED OUT** that spending on the National Safety Net Programme has stagnated at around 0.29% of GDP between 2015 and 2021.



Additionally, she mentioned that coverage of some social assistance programmes is declining and in particular the Orphan and Vulnerable Children Cash Transfer Programme.

She **NOTED** that one of the most promising types of social assistance that can accelerate Kenya's development goals is to invest in a **life-cycle approach**, starting in the first 1,000 days of a life of a child (that's from pregnancy to 2 years old). Investing in this period is the single best route to create a productive workforce for an economically thriving population in the future. With children disproportionately represented among those in poverty, this will also increase inclusion into society. She **POSED** a challenge to Kenya to reinvigorate social assistance commitments and continue to be a pioneer in this area, with other countries looking to learn from Kenya.

In his remarks Mr. Geoffrey Kaituko The Principal Secretary, State Department of Labour and Skills Development on behalf of Mr. Joseph M. Motari Principal Secretary, State Department for Social Protection and Citizen Affairs and Mr. Idris Salim Dokota Principal Secretary, State Department for ASALs and Regional Department informed the delegates that the Government of Kenya has **ATTACHED** a significant importance to the success of the conference and has taken over the initiatives from being a donor-driven development agenda and instead mainstreamed it in all its development programmes.

He **INFORMED** the delegates that after the 1st and 2nd conferences on social protection the government of Kenya initiated robust systems that have been designed to match the growing social protection demands in the country. Through such systems, there has been improved financing, coordination and partnerships that are continuously improving how the Government is steering social protection interventions.

He however, **ACKNOWLEDGED** that Kenya still has significant gaps in social protection coverage especially in matters of social protection being shock responsive and being able to reach all the citizens in the country, the need for which was exposed during the Covid 19 pandemic. It was noted there are also challenges with data collection and analysis that should inform structuring of social protection services. This has led to many deserving Kenyans being left behind.

He **URGED** all stakeholders to embrace the paradigm shift from current practices where only few Kenyans are reached to a more inclusive and sustainable system that embeds shock responsive mechanisms. In this regard, he called upon all stakeholders to consider a multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder, multi-level and multi-disciplinary approach that will deliver sustainable social protection outcomes. He **POINTED OUT** that complementarity is key amongst actors, agencies and Ministries in delivering sustainable results in social protection programme design and implementation. It was noted how cash transfers by themselves will not be enough hence, there is a need to integrate with other complementary measures and consider the policy mix which involves a combination of other productive interventions. For example, those that provide affordable and holistic improvements in the areas of education, health, agriculture,



food security, research, and SMEs including safeguarding workers against risks and vulnerabilities. This is indeed the concept behind CASH-PLUS interventions.

On behalf of the conference, he **APPLAUDED** the tremendous efforts currently happening in the social protection space by private, public, development partners, Civil Society Organizations including efforts at individual levels. He **REAFFIRMED** delegates that the Government of Kenya is ready to work with all to create an enabling environment for the execution of shock responsive social protection.

In her opening remarks, Director National Social Protection Secretariat Ms. Jane Muyanga Kitili on behalf of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection **WELCOMED** the delegates to the conference and **APPRECIATED** them for honoring the invitation for participation and having come in great numbers. She noted that this is an indication of the importance the conference subject generates not only for Eastern Africa but also the Continent and the world at large as speakers in the conference have been drawn from various parts of the world. She **ACKNOWLEDGED** and **RECOGNIZED** the support from Government, donors, partners, delegates, speakers, event organizers, and exhibitors for giving the national conference an international outlook and noting that the success of the conference depended on them.

Further, she **INFORMED** the delegates that the Conference was building on the success registered after the 1st (held in 2016) and 2nd Conference on Social Protection particularly the 2nd Social Protection Conference that was held in 2018 themed *"Scaling Up Investment in Social Protection for the Delivery of Kenya's Vision 2030 and Achievement of SDGs"*. She **STRESSED** that as stakeholders, the conference is taking stock of successes that have been achieved and using such as the foundation to catalyze the taking of bold decisions in this current 2023 social protection conference that will inform the next steps towards improving social protection services and their shock responsiveness.

She **EMPHASIZED** the need to sustain the conversation on social protection to make it more inclusive and shock responsive as it is no longer about the disadvantaged and vulnerable instead it is now about the lifecycle of all Kenyans. She **URGED** the delegates to deliberate on what more needs to be brought on board in terms of programming using the life cycle approach.

She **POSED** the question about what models should be employed in dealing with the category of the "missing middle" who may be considered not poor or vulnerable enough for some programmes and yet unable to benefit from other contributory measures and challenged the delegates to provide the **SOLUTIONS** to this important segment of social protection programme design and implementation.

Following the presentations, discussions and recommendations at the Conference attended by more than 600 participants from Kenya and other parts of the world, a Call to Action was made as presented below:

The conference **CALLS** upon the following actors to deliver on the Call to Action as follows:



Call to Action for the National Government:

1. To increase financing and budgetary allocations to facilitate increased coverage and adequacy of benefits of inclusive social assistance.
2. **Reinvigorate and redesign** programmes that have stagnated and whose coverage is declining particularly the Orphan and Vulnerable Children Cash Transfer and the Persons with Severe Disabilities Cash Transfer.
3. Horizontally and vertically expand the **Nutrition-Sensitive** social protection programmes for increased human capital gains.
4. Significantly scale up effective **CASH PLUS** interventions that combine cash assistance alongside complementary interventions to enhance outcomes across multiple sectors
5. Support the establishment of the **Unemployment Insurance Fund**
6. Support the introduction of the **Maternity Benefit Programme** under the NHIF
7. Expand social health protection to the uncovered through increased enrolment into the NHIF
8. Create awareness on the new NSSF rate and *Haba Haba* among the informal economy workers for increased registration and uptake.
9. Make provision for all social protection programmes to be more shock-responsive including interventions targeting refugees.
10. Secure Cabinet approval of the draft Kenya Social Protection Policy (2023).
11. Establish a Social Assistance Fund that will allow sustainable financing of social assistance programmes.
12. Promote **COMPLIANCE and ENFORCEMENT** of existing laws and regulations including commitments to international, continental and regional agreements and conventions.
13. To incentivize more private sector players to invest in and support the social protection system.
14. To coordinate the development, implementation and sustainability of robust **monitoring and evaluation systems** to measure the performance and enhance accountability of social protection interventions that inform decision-making.
15. Promote use of the Enhanced Single Registry and its linkages to the existing Management Information Systems for accountability, coordination and informed decision making
16. To coordinate **CAPACITY BUILDING AND LEARNING** on social protection across all social sectors.
17. To promote **greater coordination and information sharing** between national and county governments, development partners and other actors through existing structures.

Call to action for County Governments:

1. To mobilize and allocate increased budgets and financing for social protection.
2. Adopt **CASH PLUS** programmes that combine regular cash assistance with complementary measures to achieve transformative outcomes.
3. Ensure that county social protection programmes are designed to be shock-responsive.
4. Commit to greater coordination between county and national social protection to ensure complementarity and maximize coverage and impact.



5. To develop and implement social protection policies and strategies that address county specific needs to reach the most vulnerable families and are aligned with the national social protection policy
6. Support the development of robust Monitoring and Evaluation systems that are linked to the national social protection M&E Framework.
7. To promote **CAPACITY BUILDING AND LEARNING** on social protection.

Call to Action for the Parliament of Kenya:

1. Through the Committee for Social Protection in the National assembly, to expedite and pass proposed Social Assistance Act to establish a Social Assistance Fund.
2. To offer oversight on the budget allocation to social protection and shock responsive social protection by the County Governments.

Call to Action for Development Partners:

1. To enhance technical, institutional capacity and financial support to programmes aimed at increasing social protection coverage at county and national level.
2. To promote collaboration and collective efforts that deliver on increased coverage of shock responsive social protection by national and county governments.

Call to Action for the Private Sector:

1. To support the expansion of social protection coverage through their corporate social responsibility and investment.
2. To support technological innovation and adaptation for data production and management for social protection programmes.
3. To support in awareness creation about social protection interventions for increased uptake.

Call to Action to Employers:

1. To actively participate in the extension of social protection coverage to all workers including the informal economy
2. To comply with the set regulations and standards for worker protection and decent work.

Call to Action for the Academia and Research Institutions:

1. To undertake **COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH** on social protection to generate and improve knowledge management and dissemination of evidence for informed policy decisions.
2. Support capacity building initiatives on social protection.



Call to Action to the Civil Society Organizations:

1. To continue advocating for expansion of inclusive social protection to all Kenyans
2. To support social accountability of social protection interventions

Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the conference, the Call to Action is hereby READ.

Hereby signed:

Hon. Florence Bore,
Cabinet Secretary,
Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

Date: 6TH APRIL 2023

Shaheen Nilofer,
Co-Chair of the Joint Government -
Development Partners Sector Group for
Social Protection and UNICEF
Representative.

Date: 6th April 2023