



**MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION  
OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY**

**SPEECH BY**

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**DURING THE OFFICIAL VIRTUAL LAUNCH OF  
THE KENYA JOINT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS FUND FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION**

**ON JULY 15, 2020**

**AT NSSF BUILDING,  
NAIROBI**

**The Deputy Country Director for World Food Program, Mr. Calum Gardner,**

**The Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Hon. Patrick Ole Ntutu,**

**Distinguished Development Partners from the various UN Agencies joining us virtually**

**Members of Diplomatic Missions joining us virtually,**

**Representatives from Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies,**

**Ministry Staff,**

**Members of the Fourth Estate,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Good Morning,**

It gives me great pleasure to preside over the launch of the **Kenya Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund for Social Protection**. I am particularly delighted to note that this launch magnifies our country's commitment and investments towards the realization of a universal social protection system in Kenya.

As COVID-19 pandemic has taught us, the categorisation of the “poor and non-poor” are temporal because we are all very vulnerable and remain a step away from the pit of poverty. For those of us participating in this launch, we now know that we are as vulnerable as the most vulnerable persons in our communities.

Additionally, COVID-19 has also taught us that as a country, we should always be prepared for disruptions like those caused by COVID-19 and therefore need to put systems in place to cushion all citizens against such crisis so that when faced with a crisis, we are able to respond immediately and save lives rather than trying to develop systems during a crisis.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

When the COVID-19 crisis hit our country, the Government moved fast to roll out quick interventions to cushion the vulnerable groups from extreme poverty through the weekly stipend for lower income households. This was in addition to disbursing the monthly US\$20 stipend for the more than **1.1 million** elderly, people living with severe disabilities and orphans and vulnerable children.

Through these programmes, more than **US\$200** million has been disbursed during the period of COVID-19. The government appreciates the additional support that our development partners are offering especially in the urban informal settlement areas in Nairobi and our desire is to see an expansion of this programme to cover other parts of the country because COVID-19 has not spared the vulnerable outside the major urban areas.

As a country we have realised that investing in life-cycle universal social protection system is one of the surest way of ensuring that all Kenyans live in dignity and are more resilient and capable of living within the confines of “a normal life”. The Government therefore, has shown its commitment to cushion vulnerable populations against poverty by spending approximately **US\$260** million annually on social assistance programmes

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Today, the Government of Kenya is investing **0.4 percent** of the country’s GDP to provide social assistance to **12 percent** of the national population. In the current fiscal year, approximately US\$ **250m** has been allocated for social assistance with an additional US\$ 100m set aside to respond to the COVID-19, this is because we are aware that home grown financing will ensure sustainability of programmes over time.

The significant strides that our country has made on social protection especially on the increased home-grown financing is one that has required a lot of commitment, hard work and proper strategies. Key among these strategies has been embracing of a more coordinated approach in the design and implementation of various interventions; the willingness and determination of the Government of Kenya to continue improving the wellbeing of all Kenyans; and the support we have continued to receive from development partners. To date, my Ministry has been able to attract a number of partners both bilateral and multilateral, some of whom have joined us today.

We thank our development partners for the commitment demonstrated by being part of us in this very exciting journey of addressing the plight of the poor and vulnerable in our country. It gives us a lot of satisfaction every time we put a smile on the life of a child, a person with disability, an older persons or any poor and vulnerable person and it is our believe that by serving the less fortunate among us, we are serving God.

However, despite our success, we look forward to the time when our country will reach the level of investment similar to what is witnessed in other developing countries like South Africa, Mauritius, Brazil and Georgia which have dedicated more than 3 per cent of their GDP to the social protection programmes.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As a Ministry, we are committed to continue reviewing policies and measures, including legislative and institutional reforms that enhance the capacity and opportunities for the poor and vulnerable to improve and sustain their lives. We are in the process of establishing a Social Assistance Fund whose draft bill is in parliament having already gone through the First Reading.

Additionally, social protection being a very dynamic sector, my Ministry has reviewed the National Social Protection Policy of 2012, to capture issues that have emerged. The revised policy adopts **a life cycle approach** as its guiding principle and puts forward a nationally defined minimum for four basic social protection guarantees that shall be established by law, in line with ILO 202 recommendation.

The policy also provides social protection guarantees to those vulnerable to climate-related shocks, to natural and man induced disasters and also introduces a complementary pillar since lessons have taught us that cash alone is not enough to fully protect the poor and vulnerable persons because they also need access to affordable healthcare, social security, social assistance and to engage in microeconomic enterprises.

The Government is also committed to continue leveraging on technology and robust information systems to drive efficiency in the delivery of social protection while keeping abreast with innovations to cut on administrative costs of managing social protection programmes.

We are aware that the cost-efficiency of Social Protection programmes can be measured by the size of administrative costs in relation to the total cost of programs. With this in realization, we have joined hands with our partners and developed a single registry that brings together existing programmes so that they are able to inform each other and avoids duplication of efforts.

We are also in the process of developing an Enhanced Single Registry that will integrate and harmonise data collection efforts. The data collected will be used by various stakeholders making interventions for the poor and vulnerable across various sectors seamless. I am also pleased to note that my ministry is implementing a new payments solution that empowers the beneficiaries through choice of financial service providers and allows them to save their benefits for future use.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As Kenya develops and moves towards middle-income country status, higher investment in social protection will create greater stability, increased prosperity, a more dynamic and competitive economy; and also ensure that every citizen is included in society; so that they can reach their full potential hence resulting in a more productive workforce.

Cognizant of this fact, my ministry is increasingly putting in place measures necessary to advance social inclusion policies as a way of ensuring that no one is left behind. We therefore note that the Social Development Goals Joint Programme will play a critical role in addressing the underlying drivers of exclusion.

We are happy to note that, the Joint Programme we are launching today is aligned to the Government's "**Big Four**" agenda which aims at achieving the universal health coverage; improved food security and nutrition; increased access to affordable housing, and manufacturing. This programme is also aligned to Kenya's vision 2030 blue print and the global agenda for 2030.

It is our hope and desire to see this programme going along way in augmenting the ongoing efforts of identifying and addressing critical policy gaps and accelerate integration between universal social protection and socioeconomic services, while leveraging on partnerships for scale up as espoused by SDG 17. In accelerating the realization of the relevant SDG targets, the Joint Programme will contribute towards further generation of evidence for policy development and inform specific plans and financing strategies to make social protection for all Kenyans a reality.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We are grateful to the Governments of Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Monaco, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland and the European Union for support that they have been giving to my Ministry in support of Social Assistance and Protection. We also appreciate your generosity for also providing **two (2) Million** US dollars for this Joint Programme which will be implemented through the UN system in Kenya under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator's Office in close collaboration with WFP, UNICEF, ILO and FAO.

As I conclude, let me appeal to all our partners to consider increasing the joint SGD programme grant value to a figure higher than the current **USD.2B** and consider extending the implementation period beyond the current 2-year period.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is now my honour and privilege to preside over this official launch of the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Programme and call upon as many partners as possible to emulate the example set here today by the 12 donor countries and the four UN agencies under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator.

**Thank you and God bless you all.**