



NEWSLETTER



Social Protection re-introduced to the leadership of Parliament



Speaker, Rt Hon. Jacob Oulanya addressing members of the Forum during a meeting in the Boardroom at Parliament.

With a new term in progress, the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection (UPFSP) re-introduced the social protection advocacy agenda to the Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Jacob Oulanya.

In a meeting held on the 22nd of September 2021 in the Speaker's boardroom, members of the Forum led by the Chairperson, Jacob Richards Opolot and partners from the International Labour Organisation, highlighted the core advocacy areas for the next five years.

The members pointed out some of the recurring challenges that continue to affect

EDITORIAL

From targeting one risk to a Systems Approach to Social Protection



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We are re-energised by the commitment from the leadership and Members of the 11th Parliament to support the Forum's advocacy efforts, a promise we do not take for granted.

The Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection prides itself in having played a critical role in delivering the national roll-out of the Senior Citizens Grant. Through aggressive advocacy efforts in both the 9th and 10th Parliament, the grant, which at one point was at the verge of being scrapped is now being implemented in all districts across the country with the government of Uganda taking the biggest share of financial contribution.

The success of the Senior Citizens Grant therefore provides a strong foundation to broaden the debate from targeting one risk (old age) to include other vulnerabilities. Social Protection coverage remains very low in the country leaving so many Ugandans at risk of falling into or deeper into poverty.

As a Forum, our advocacy agenda for the next five years is to ensure that there is appropriate leg-

islation and financing to build a comprehensive and sustainable social protection system based on a life cycle approach.

We are re-energised by the commitment from the leadership and Members of the 11th Parliament to support the Forum's advocacy efforts, a promise we do not take for granted.

At UPFSP we are thankful for the role played by the Board/Executive committee headed by Hon Opolot Jacob Richards as the term of office comes to an end, we are hopeful the new team will take the advocacy agenda to greater heights as so much has already been done.

We invite MPs of the 11th Parliament to join the Forum and show interest in the various leadership positions.

Kiconco Katabaazi Patrick
Coordinator, UPFSP.



L-R: UPFSP Vice Chairperson, Hon. Elizabeth Karungi, UPFSP Coordinator, Kiconco K. Patrick and the Chairperson, Hon. Jacob Opolot during the meeting with the Speaker.

the effective implementation of social protection interventions in the country namely; the limited coordination between agencies in the implementation of social protection programmes exemplified by the NIRA and the Expanding Social protection programme which has led to exclusion, the consistent funding gaps towards SAGE and poor release performance with sh38bn in arrears for the FY20/21.

While addressing the meeting, the Speaker called on the Forum to broaden the social protection advocacy beyond the Senior Citizens Grant so as to benefit the other categories of vulnerable populations.

"The Senior Citizens Grant is already out there. There is a policy in place and financing for it despite the challenges. We now need to break new ground and widen engagements," Rt. Hon. Oulanya.

The Speaker was addressing members of the Forum and stakeholders during an interface on Wednesday 22nd September 2021 in the Speaker's Boardroom. The meeting was intended to update the speaker on activities of the Forum and proposed advocacy agenda in the 11th Parliament.

According to the Speaker, there is need to raise the debate level and get people in the districts and across the different political parties to start engaging on matters of social protection covering all the different vulnerabilities.

"Social Protection is not only about the older persons. People have been made vulnerable due to natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic among others. The debate should be able to cover all that," he said.

The Speaker argued that in the face of resource constraints, not every vulnerable person may be reached with a cash transfer as is the case with the Senior Citizens Grant. However, the Forum should be able to give these people a voice and highlight their plight.

"They are so many vulnerable people and they need our support. And sometimes all you need is to tell their story and people will respond," Rt. Hon. Oulanya.

Hon. Oulanya, who is also a social protection champion pledged his continued support to the Forum's advocacy agenda as an individual but also in his capacity as the Speaker of Parliament.

"As Parliament, we will continue to provide you with opportunities to engage members. And personally you have my support as an individual but also in my capacity as the speaker of this Parliament. So, you have double support," Rt. Hon. Oulanya.

Social Protection according to ILO's Mwenya Kapasa, who also attended the meeting is one of the core pillars of their organisation and there is an appreciation of the role of Parlia-

ment in changing legislation and ensuring sustainable financing for social protection.

She highlighted ILOs interest in working with the Forum so as to explore avenues for advocacy towards a system-based approach to social protection.

"We want to look at social protection not only from one risk but the different risks along the life-cycle. We will therefore see how to take advantage of your support and are very happy that we are able to partner with the Forum," Mwenya.

Members of the Forum led by the Chairperson, Hon. Jacob Richards Opolot, welcomed the Rt. Hon. Speakers pledge for continued support. This is a major starting point in advancing the social protection agenda in the 11th Parliament.

Hon. Santa Alum, UPFSP Executive Committee member on behalf of the Forum appreciated the Speaker for having taken time off his busy schedule for the meeting, a sign of his interest and passion for social protection.

UPFSP Priorities in the 11th Parliament

1. To ensure that the age of eligibility is revised downwards to 65years

Building on the current national roll-out, the Forum will continue to push for the revision of the age of eligibility from the current 80 years to 65 years as committed by government.

2. Comprehensive implementation of the Social Protection Policy

The Forum will continue to advocate for the full implementation of the policy so as such interventions such as the child grant are introduced, disability grant and the labour intensive public works main-streamed and interventions put in place to safeguard informal sector workers.

3. Obtain long term financing for Social Protection in the National Budget

To ensure that the Government sustains financing for Social Protection, the Forum will continue to lobby through the various strategic committees of Parliament and Finance Ministry to ensure that funding for social protection is embedded in the national budget such that base allocations are ensured and incremental funding added with increase in overall budget size over the years.

4. Equip members of the Forum with knowledge and information to technically scrutinize and review various laws and policies around SP

The Forum will take deliberate measures to equip them with knowledge and skills on social protection advocacy through working sessions facilitated by proven experts on legal matters related to social protection

5. Share evidence on the rationale and benefits of Social Protection in an attempt to lobby the highest levels of Government and Diplomatic Call

High level meeting will be organized for the leadership of the Forum to make presentations on the case for Social Protection as a way of soliciting support for the Social Protection agenda from both government and development partners.

6. Facilitate drafting of Bills in respect to ring-fencing resources for Social Protection

During this five year term, the Forum will support work already on-going among Social Protection Champions to draft a Bill on ensuring that funding is obtained and ring-fenced for Social Protection issues.

7. Strong Social Protection Delivery System

There is a growing number of cases of exclusion from the SCG and other social protection interventions due to a lack of updated database for would be beneficiaries. This is not only costly to government but also hampers effective delivery of these otherwise good responses.

UPFSP meets Committee on Gender; secures pledge for continued support



“As a Committee, we will be ready to work with the Forum to ensure that all Ugandans are safeguarded against vulnerabilities. There should be inclusiveness and harmonisation of the different social protection interventions,” said Hon. Flavia Kabahenda Rwabuhoro, the Committee Chairperson.

The Chairperson of the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development, Hon. Flavia Kabahenda Rwabuhoro addressing the meeting.

The Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection (UPFSP) had its first interface with the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development in the 11th Parliament on Tuesday 21st September 2021.

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According to Hon. Kabahenda, there is need to scale up synergies in the social protection interventions and ensure that these reach the last beneficiary such as children. The Social Protection Bill therefore as highlighted by the Forum would go a long way in addressing this.

The Committee of Gender, Labour and Social Development is just like other committees, mandated to carry out the functions such as examining and commenting on the policy matters affecting their respective ministries, initiate or evaluate action programmes of those Ministries and Sectors and to make appropriate recommendations on them. This therefore makes it a critical avenue for the advancement of UPFSP's advocacy agenda.



UPFSP Board members, Hon. Margaret Babadiri and Hon. Jacob Richards Opolot, ILO's Technical Officer-Social Protection, Mwenya Kapasa and UPFSP coordinator, Kiconco K. Patrick at the meeting.

“As a Committee, we will be ready to work with the Forum to ensure that all Ugandans are safeguarded against vulnerabilities. There should be inclusiveness and harmonisation of the different social protection interventions,” said Hon. Flavia Kabahenda Rwabuhoro, the Committee Chairperson.

According to Hon. Kabahenda, there is need to scale up synergies in the social protection interventions and ensure that these reach the last beneficiary such as children. The Social Protection Bill therefore as highlighted by the Forum would go a long way in addressing this.

Members of the Committee raised concerns on the adequacy and consistency of the Senior Citizens Grant (Ugan-



Members of UPFSP and Stakeholder before the Committee

da's major direct cash transfer programme targeting older persons aged 80 years and above). They argued that a number of their eligible constituents remain excluded from the programme due to the non-registration or lack of national IDs.

"The Senior Citizens Grant may be of small value, however, we need to ensure that even that is consistently paid out to beneficiaries. We also need to collectively demand that the age of eligibility is reduced from the current 80 years." Hon. Rosemary Fortunate Nantongo, Shadow Gender Minister.

In the face of the coronavirus pandemic, Hon. Hillary Innocent Kiyaga, the representative for Mawokota North highlighted the plight of the different players in the creative economy such as artists whose livelihood has been curtailed due to the restrictions to control the spread of COVID-19.

According to the Chairperson of the Forum, Hon. Jacob Richards Opolot, the current age of eligibility of 80 years was on commitment by government that this will be lowered progressively until we get to the recommended 65 years as per international standards on old age. He argued that now that the national roll-out was achieved, it is time to start discussions on consistency and value of the grant.

In her submission, ILOs Social Protection Technical Officer, Mwenya Kapasa, who also joined the meeting, noted that as an organisation, they are working to promote a systems approach to social protection. A system that will create a basis on which all the different interventions can rely on.

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According to the Chairperson of the Forum, Hon. Jacob Richards Opolot, the current age of eligibility of 80 years was on commitment by government that this will be lowered progressively until we get to the recommended 65 years as per international standards on old age.

"System building can not happen overnight. However, it is important to start somewhere and the the Senior Citizens Grant is a basis to push for other contingencies." she argued adding that there is need to present a business case for social protection so that there is an appreciation that social protection is not a consumptive expenditure but rather an investment.

The other stakeholders that attended the meeting included among others, Robert Musoke, the Social Policy Officer and Daphine Akampurira, the coordinator of the Uganda Social Protection Platform.

The Committee welcomed the request for a closer working relationship and pledged to be available on any engagements and opportunities for capacity building aimed at promoting social protection in the country.

UPFSP Communications

President Museveni positive on reviewing the age eligibility for SAGE



President Museveni addressing representatives of the elderly during celebrations to mark International Day of Older Persons at State House Entebbe on Friday. PPU Photo.

"This business of bringing the age of eligibility down from 80years, we can do it eventually especially after we get out of this corona. Remember there is the other side to it of giving them some purchasing power. This is good for the economy," said the President.

President Museveni was presiding over the International Day of Older Persons celebrations at State House on 1st October 2021. The second virtual celebrations were held under the theme 'Digital Access for All Ages'.

"There is sugar in the factories and we are looking for market from Kenya and Tanzania because some people here can't buy the sugar. This little money we are giving out can help them buy some of these essentials elements of diet such as sugar, milk and salt," he said.

SAGE, or the Senior Citizens Grant specifically, as noted by the President enhances the recipients purchasing power and thus helping the economy. Indeed, according to a 2019 study carried out by Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development together with the Ministry of Gender, Labour

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"This business of bringing the age of eligibility down from 80years, we can do it eventually especially after we get out of this corona. Remember there is the other side to it of giving them some purchasing power. This is good for the economy,"

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni.

and Social Development, interventions such as the Senior Citizens Grants can have an annual poverty reduction rate of 1.75%. This implied that over a 10-year period, Uganda's poverty rate of 21.4% (at the time) would be down by over 10%.

The study further showed that if all targeted groups are covered, increased social protection spending could enhance Uganda's GDP growth rate by an additional 1.37% in 2020/31.

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Quite important as highlighted by the President, there is need to empower the population so as not to retire in poverty. Using the analogy of blood transfusion, the President argued for the need to prevent the “anaemia” (vulnerability and poverty) without waiting for blood donations(support from development partners).

Currently, the age of eligibility for grant is 80 years and above and a total of 340,000 older persons across the country receive the monthly stipend of sh25,000. The issue of contention has been on the fact that with eligibility at 80years, a number of vulnerable older persons in a country with a life expectancy of 65 years are being excluded.

Government earlier committed to progressively review the age of eligibility for the Senior Citizens Grant down to 65years.

Quite important as highlighted by the President, there is need to empower the population so as not to retire in poverty. Using the analogy of blood transfusion, the President argued for the need to prevent the “anaemia” (vulnerability and poverty)

without waiting for blood donations(support from development partners).

Speaking on behalf of development partners, Andrew Ockenden, from the British High Commission congratulated the government of Uganda on the progress made which has seen a total of sh400b invested over the last 10 years building in a comprehensive social protection system.

“Social Protection is a core component of a successful market economy particularly now as we make efforts to recover from the impact of COVID-19. Social protection can transform societies and economies as has been seen in high income countries where about 12% of GDP is spent on social security,” Ockenden argued.

This, according to the Chairperson of the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection, is a welcome development and as a Forum we grateful that the President views SAGE from an investment point of view.

“The 10th Parliament accepted the option for the 80 years so as to enable the national roll-out to happen and indeed give the programme a national appeal. It is therefore time to see progressive reduction of the age of eligibility as promised by government then,” he said.

UPFSP Communications



Some of the representatives of the elderly listen to President Museveni's address during celebrations to mark International Day of Older Persons at Entebbe on Friday. PPU Photo

UPFSP MOMENTS ON CAMERA





MPs want Social Protection Expenditure Increased to 2% of GDP



L-R: Hon. Flavia Kabahenda Rwabuhoro, Hon. Maurice Kibalya, Save the Children's Global Advocacy Advisor-Child Poverty, David Lambert Tumwesigye and UPFSP Coordinator, Kiconco Katabaazi Patrick during the plenary session at the meeting.

Members of Parliament sitting on the Committees of Budget and Gender, Labour and Social Development want government to increase social protection expenditure to at least 2% of GDP.

"Our funding to social protection is still very low at less than 1% of GDP. It is important we come up with policies to cover the vulnerable groups in the country and see that expenditure rises to 2% or more of GDP" said Hon. Patrick Omara, MP Otuke County and member of the Budget Committee of Parliament.

This was during UPFSP's first orientation session for Members of Parliament sitting on the Committee of Gender, Labour and Social Development and the Committee on Budget held at the Serena Hotel in Kampala on Monday 25th October, 2021.

Currently, Uganda spends about 0.7% of GDP on Social Protection with only 2.8% of the population covered by at least one social protection benefit according to the latest World Social Protection Report by the International Labour Organisation. This has left majority of the population vulnerable to social, economic and health shocks.

The MPs also argued for the need to reduce the age of eligibility for the Senior Citizens Grant from the current 80 years to at least 65 years so that more vulnerable persons are covered. This is in line with a commitment made by government to progressively reduce the age of eligibility.



Participants at the training.

According to Hon. Silas Aogon, UPFSP's Committee member, social protection advocacy in the 11th Parliament should be able to address such issues as health care, disability, unemployment among other vulnerabilities.

"We need to come up with a clear strategy so that when we are making petitions or raising motions and questions on the floor of parliament, these speak to what we want to achieve as a Forum. This therefore raises the critical question of champions who are empowered and have a clear understanding of social protection," Hon. Silas Aogon, MP Kumi Municipality.

In his presentation, social protection expert, David Lambert Tumwesigye, who is also the Global Advocacy Advisor for Save the Children International, underscored the critical role



Members of the Committees of Gender and Budget after the training session.

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Participants at the training.

of social protection in achieving Uganda’s national development agenda and overall Vision 2040.

“Social Protection is a proven tool for reducing poverty and fixing inequality. Our inequality levels are on the rise especially in urban areas and as shown by the IMF, this hurts economic growth,” Tumwesigye.

The role of Social Protection as explained by Tumwesigye is to reduce the demand side barriers. These include barriers to health, food, education, decent employment among others.

Delivering social protection interventions according to Kiconco Patrick Katabaazi, UPFSP’s coordinator, lies in building a system that relies more on guaranteeing the right to social protection rather than good will.

The Chairperson of the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development, while closing the engagement, emphasised the need to build a strong social protection system that cushion the population against vulnerabilities along the life-cycle.

“We are here to build blocks for a social protection system. The different international and regional protocols that Uganda is

signatory to provide a substantial framework on which we can start designing, implementing and monitoring social protection system from a rights based approach ,” she said.

The meeting was intended to introduce members of the two committees of Parliament to the work of the Forum and the advocacy agenda for the 11th Parliament that is hinged on “Increasing Social Protection Coverage and Financing in Uganda”.

The members resolved to;

- Advocate for increased investment in social protection to cover all vulnerabilities
- Empower social protection champions
- Ensure reduction of the age of eligibility for the Senior Citizens Grant
- Advocacy on the operationalisation of the social protection single registry
- Ensure that all eligible beneficiaries of the Senior Citizens Grant are enrolled on the programme to avoid exclusion.

UPFSP Communications



Targeting women under Labour Intensive Public Works in Uganda

Joshua Onyang

Project Officer at the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection

The inter-relationship between employment and poverty is an uphill stride that many developing countries continue to grapple with. However, little effort has been put in place to tackle the gender-specific constraints and characteristics when understanding this relationship. As part of Uganda's efforts to evaluate strategies for poverty eradication through Social Protection, the promotion of productive employment through Labour Intensive Public Works (LIPW) has taken precedence.

The demand for LIPW programmes is enhanced in Uganda by the shortage and deteriorating infrastructure combined with increasing degradation of environmental resources notwithstanding the rapid population growth, the low absorptive capacity of the formal sector and low labour productivity in agriculture. The contractionary effects of structural adjustment on employment leaves Uganda facing very high levels of unemployment and under-employment with women constituting the biggest share of this category.

LIPW programmes have developed as a major policy instrument for creating employment in the short term and minimizing serious income and consumption shortfalls amongst the poor. With women being overly represented in this category, it is necessary for both policy making and programme development to assess how, and whether, women have been able to share in the benefits of LIPW and how successful these strategies have been in expanding opportunities for women.

Poor women have greater social, cultural and economic disadvantages than their male counterparts. This, therefore, requires distinct and deliberate measures to ensure that LIPW equally benefits the poor women.

The strategies and modalities of operation under LIPW can either facilitate or hamper women's participation in the programme and therefore their share of benefits. In the Ugandan context, MGLSD has rolled out the National LIPW Guidelines that cut across various Ministries, Departments and Agencies that are implementing programmes and projects that require public works. The National LIPW Guidelines clearly stipulate that at least 50% of the direct beneficiaries shall be

female and 20% shall come from households with only vulnerable groups clearly embracing the aspect of Social Protection.

In the recently concluded NUSAF3 which was the flagship LIPW programme under the office of the Prime Minister (OPM), a total of 1,620,160 beneficiaries were female against 1,341,665 males. This translates into an absorption rate of 55% to 45% respectively.

In the Ugandan context, social and cultural norms have played a huge role in defining and sustaining rigidity in the gender division of labour. This is evident in the division of responsibilities between the reproductive (household) work and productive (market) value.

Considering Uganda is an agrarian nation with most of its working population in the informal sector, women bear the burden of domestic tasks like growing food crops, collecting water and firewood and caring for the elderly and sick. The time and effort required for these tasks in many cases is not rewarded monetarily. This has left rural women impoverished and therefore created the demand for women to enter into the wage labour market. Therefore, with the growing importance of the market (money) economy and the organization of production outside the household, it has become inevitable for women to enter into the wage labour market.

Another factor that has been a barrier for women is the issue of land ownership. Land, which is a major factor of production and yet is usually passed down hereditarily through the male child. This means that most women come gain ownership of land through marriage. Control over the allocation of women's labour may be exercised solely by male heads of household, or maybe shared or fully exercised by women. Households are not always an integrated production unit as it seems since men and women cultivate their own land and crops, draw separate personal incomes and meet separate financial obligations.

While impoverishment is a major force compelling women to search for wage employment, the desire to liberate themselves from male control at home over their labour and over human reproduction also explains why peasant women want to find jobs.

Due to the structure of gender relations in society, the social, cultural and economic constraints specifically confronting women and the inherent biases that favour men in development programmes, the women who are poor, may fail to benefit from these programmes. For poor women, having a voice in decisions concerning resources that affect their life and work is often the most difficult to achieve. Even where they may have physical representation, they may be ineffective and unheard.

It is therefore important to integrate women in the development processes in order to strengthen their participation in general and mainstream the programmes to be gender-sensitive. This strategy puts women's interests at the core of institutional goals and is streamlined in policies and programmes.

NUSAF3 made progress with women's representation in the development of the sub-projects and involvement of women in the leadership of the sub-projects and watershed. In a recently concluded field monitoring of LIPW projects, it was noticed that the sub-projects with more women than men were more successful. Although these local participatory mechanisms are still weak from a women's standpoint, one must credit the direction taken by these programmes and the local experience that is being built.

What is clear is that the LIPW strategy has direct income transfer benefits and that it can minimize households' risks of consumption shortfalls. But it is also clear that in order to reach poor women, and the poor in general, the strategy requires a gender perspective that does not end at objective-setting but runs through planning and implementation.

Joshua Onyang

The writer is a **Project Officer** at the **Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection**

Champions training leaves members eager to push for expanding social protection coverage and financing



Social Protection champions after the training at Speke Resort in Munyonyo.

After a two-day residential training workshop for social protection champions in the 11th Parliament, members pledged to explore the different avenues to push for expanding coverage and enhanced financing for social protection.

The training workshop that was held on 29th and 30th October at the Speke Resort in Munyonyo, explored such areas as a general understanding of social protection and its role in Uganda's national development agenda, the budgeting process and opportunities for social protection advocacy, the role of MPs in the social protection agenda and a brief on the state of social protection in Uganda.

Among the priority areas the champions want to pursue in the next five years include; ensuring that the age of eligibility for the Senior Citizens Grant is reduced from the current 80 years, follow up on the National Health Insurance Bill, review of the tax regime for aids and appliances for persons with disabilities, social protection strategy for the informal sector workers among others.



L-R: Hon. Flavia Kabahenda Rwabuhoro, UPFSP Coordinator, Kiconco K. Patrick and the State Minister for Gender and Culture, Hon Peace Mutuuzo displaying one of UPFSP's advocacy materials.



Participants at the training workshop



ESP's Policy and Advocacy Advisor, Beatrice Okillan making a presentation during the training.

While officiating at the official opening, the State Minister for Gender and Culture, Hon. Peace Mutuuzo, stated that the government of Uganda was committed to gradually increase allocation to Social Protection Programmes, resources permitting, as you have witnessed over the past years.

According to the Minister, the National roll-out of the Senior Citizens Grant to all older persons aged 80 years and above coupled with increased funding towards the disability grant (from sh2.1bn to sh9.6bn in the current financial year) is a sign of government's commitment.

Government as explained by the Minister is also spearheading reforms in the Public Service Pension Scheme and the National Social Security Fund with a view to expanding coverage and diversifying benefits to the subscribers.

Social protection as highlighted by the Minister is critical in enhancing Uganda's human capital and unlocking the potential of the youthful population to accelerate, and sustain

the socio-economic transformation anticipated in the Uganda Vision 2040.

While addressing participants, the Chairperson of the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Protection reiterated the need to link the different interventions such as the Youth Livelihood Fund, UWEF and Senior Citizens Grant, productive sectors of the economy.

"Empowering youth and women under YLP and UWEF respectively has an impact on the number of people that would eventually require the Senior Citizens Grant for example. These people would have been made resilient enough not to require the tax-funded pension under SAGE. This should therefore be motivation enough for government to sustain and adequately fund these programmes" she said.

The Forum is ready to continue being a rallying platform for members with an interest on social protection.

UPFSP Communications



Participants at the training workshop



Why we can't postpone building a strong social security system

Gloria Nakajubi

Communications Specialist, Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection

According to the recently released World Social Protection Report 2020, just about 3.2% of Uganda's labour force is covered by a pension scheme (active contributors). Indeed only 2.8% of the population is covered by at least one social protection benefit.

The report, published by the International Labour Organisation, points to the rather vulnerable state of Uganda's labour force which has been exasperated by the coronavirus pandemic. Even at the slightest income shock, majority of the population is at risk of falling into or deeper into poverty.

Social security refers to protective and preventive interventions to mitigate factors that lead to income shocks and affect consumption such as retirement, ill-health, unemployment, old age, disability, death of breadwinner or disasters. A strong social security system enables individuals to continue living dignified lives in retirement or when faced with income or economic shocks.

It is important to appreciate that Uganda's labour force is largely concentrated in the informal sector which contributes about 54% of the country's GDP. Studies further indicate that currently 92% of the youth in Uganda entering the workforce join the informal sector.

There are currently no deliberate, government led interventions targeting the informal sector workers. The small scale, disaggregated, private sector or individual led interventions are rather limited in coverage and scope and faced with a myriad of operational challenges.

However, these existing schemes are an opportunity on which government can leverage for a more sustainable system. Building on existing interventions is not only cost effective but also elicits ownership from the would-be beneficiaries.

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Building a strong social security and indeed social protection system can not be postponed. With that, the country will be better placed to respond to economic shocks and the population more resilient in the face of calamity.

'Building back better' as a country requires us to ensure that today's vulnerabilities that have been exposed by the coronavirus pandemic are addressed accordingly. Overcoming the effects of the pandemic will largely depend on interventions that facilitate the population to actively and productively participate in the economy but in a more resilient manner.

Quite important is to appreciate the on-off interventions that the government came up with to support especially the informal sector workers such as the food distribution to urban dwellers in Kampala, Wakiso and Mukono and recently a cash transfer of sh100,000. Rather than being an end in themselves, lessons should be drawn on the rather lacking response system in the face of an economic shock as has been witnessed.

Building a strong social security and indeed social protection system can not be postponed. With that, the country will be better placed to respond to economic shocks and the population more resilient in the face of calamity.

The article was first published in the *New Vision Newspaper*.

Gloria Nakajubi

Communications Specialist, Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection



Quotable Quotes



Yoweri Tibuhaburwa Kaguta Museveni
President of Uganda

This business of bringing the age of eligibility [for the Senior Citizens Grant] down from 80 years, we can do it eventually especially after we get out of this corona. Remember there is the other side to it of giving them some purchasing power. This is good for the economy



Rt. Hon. Jacob Oulanya
Speaker of Parliament

Social Protection is not only about the older persons. People have been made vulnerable due to natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic among others. The social protection debate should be able to cover all that.



Hon. Flavia Kabahenda Rwabuhoro
Chairperson, Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development

We have turned into a relief country. We have become managers of disasters and poverty. We need to pool together all the different interventions for a comprehensive approach and a system that tracks the lifecycle.



Kiconco Katabaazi Patrick
Public Policy Expert and UPFSP Coordinator

A wholistic approach is a strategic investment. An investment in one population group boosts returns from another group. Investment in children for example is likely to yield the utmost returns since it is the foundational stage.



Menya Kapasa-
Social Protection Technical Officer, ILO

We want to look at social protection not only from one risk but the different risks along the life-cycle. We will therefore see how to take advantage of your support and are very happy that we are able to partner with the Forum.



Andrew Ockenden
Development Director, British High Commission

Social Protection is a core component of a successful market economy particularly now as we make efforts to recover from the impact of COVID-19. Social protection can transform societies and economies as has been seen in high income countries where about 12% of GDP is spent on social security.

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DISCLAIMER

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