



**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, GENDER, SOCIAL
PROTECTION, SENIOR CITIZENS AFFAIRS AND
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES
OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY**

SPEECH BY

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**DURING THE WORKSHOP ON “EVIDENCE-BASED
AGEING RELATED POLICIES IN SUB -SAHARAN
AFRICA” 16TH -18TH NOVEMBER, 2021
LAKE NAIVASHA, KENYA**

Representative from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)

Representatives from the African Union;

Representatives from the Economic Commission of Africa (ECA);

Representatives from the International Institute on Ageing United Nations – Malta (INIA);

Representatives from the African Population and Health Research Centre;

Representatives from the Stakeholder Group on Ageing in Africa (SGA)

Distinguished Delegates from Lesotho, Rwanda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Liberia, Nigeria and Malawi

Representatives from various Civil Society Organizations and Older Persons Organizations;

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies & Gentlemen

On behalf of the Government of Kenya, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this remarkable workshop on “Evidence-based Ageing -Related Policies in Sub -Saharan Africa.”

Allow me to first commend United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs **(UNDESA)**, for organizing this workshop and bringing

together Experts, Policy Makers and Civil Society Organizations from across the African Continent. This forum is timely and it will provide the invited participants the opportunities to deliberate and share experiences on evidence based ageing related policies within their respective Countries.

I wish to acknowledge that this is not the first time my Ministry is having the interactions with UNDESA. The Ministry was assisted in capacity Support during the development process of the National Family Promotion and Protection Policy (2016 August);

The Ministry in Collaboration with Strathmore University organized a Capacity development workshop on aligning the draft policy with the Sustainable Development Goals focusing in SDGs, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11 and 16. Where comments were collated and incorporated to the policy document (April 2019);

In partnership with UNDESA, Strathmore University, the Ministry and other family stakeholders developed a 5-year draft action plan for the implementation of the National Policy on Family Promotion and Protection to provide a clear roadmap towards the realization of its goal and objectives(December, 2019);

The Government the of Kenya was honored for one of the **2020 International Federation for Family Development (IFFD) Awards**, this was through the Capacity Development support for aligning Kenya's Draft National Policy on Family Promotion and Protection with SDGs and defining an action plan for its implementation(February 2020).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to appreciate the efforts being made by other partners. Through partnership support, UNICEF and the Ministry established a Multi-sectoral **Technical Working Group** membership to provide coordination and leadership on the development of a National Parenting Programme. This programme will outline a framework for the design, implementation and monitoring of evidence based Parenting programmes with the goal of improving how parents' approach and execution of their roles as parents, for the holistic development of children and families in Kenya.

The Government acknowledges the contributions of the international organizations, Non-governmental organizations and local organizations and groups in advocating and lobbying for policies and legislation that focus on the care, protection and support of the older persons in Kenya. HelpAge International (Kenya), the academia, Organizations for older persons and individuals of good will continues to support programmes and activities that enhance the wellbeing of the senior citizens of Kenya.

The Ministry has been facilitating the **Ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa**. Cabinet approved the ratification of the Protocol together with the one for Persons with Disabilities on 25th February 2021. Both Protocols were presented and forwarded to the National Assembly where they were approved and ready for forwarding to AU for ratification.

The Government has developed a draft National Retirement benefits framework for the provision of and management of retirement benefits in Kenya.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Globally the Older persons represent a large and the fastest growing segment of the population. By 2050¹, there will be older persons than children under the age of fifteen (15) years and it is projected that the number of older persons will be more than double from 900 million² currently to nearly 2 billion.³ A demographic transformation of such magnitude has far reaching implications for society at all levels. The group of persons aged 80 and over, which currently accounts for fourteen percent (14%) will grow to twenty-one percent (21%) in 2050.⁴

These remarkable gains can be attributed to the access to health care services; better nutrition, improved public health; and the access to care and social protection services for healthy ageing.

In Kenya, the population of older persons has increased from a modest number of **270,000** during the first National Census of **1949** rising to **1,926,651(5% of the total population)** in **2009** to **2,740,515** against a population of **47 million in 2019** translating to **6%** of the total population.

This demographic shift towards increased older persons in Kenya has been accompanied by rapid urbanization, shifting attitudes within communities and population movements. In particular, the increased movement of younger persons from rural to urban areas in search of employment has led to the breakdown of the in-built traditional social protection systems which protected older persons.

¹ Political Declaration and Madrid Internal Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

To address this challenge, the Government of Kenya is implementing a number of programmes that support Older Persons namely: -

- 1) **The Social Protection Program** – which promotes the dignity and inclusion of Older Persons through the Inua Jamii Programme that provides Cash Transfer to households with Older Persons. Currently, the program covers 833,000 older persons out of the 1.2 million (70 plus) older persons.
- 2) **Family Strengthening and Social Welfare Program** - that offers psychosocial support to distressed families. The Government has enlisted over 1800 Lay Volunteer Counsellors (LVCs) across the Country to provide psycho- social support, that is, guidance and counselling services including referral and support services to vulnerable and distressed Older Persons, Persons with Disabilities and Families.
- 3) **Care and support Program for Older Persons** -where the Government has:
 - a) Established Kirinyaga Rescue Centre for Older Persons in Mwea, Kirinyaga County to accommodate vulnerable older persons rescued from incidences of either abuse, neglect or abandonment. The Centre also serves as a model rescue centre which can be replicated by other Counties.
 - b) Developed the National Standards and Guidelines for the Management of Institutions of Older Persons (2018) to regulate the registration and management of Institutions for Older Persons and improve the quality of services offered to older persons.

- c) Established a National Databank for Institutions and Partners dealing with programs on Older Persons & Ageing in the 47 Counties for the effective coordination, planning and implementation of Older Persons Programs in the country.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

The Government of Kenya is committed in ensuring equality and inclusion of all Kenyans as a prerequisite to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and its clarion call to “**Leave No One Behind**”.

The Constitution of Kenya recognizes and provides explicit rights, entitlements and privileges for Older Persons with specific obligations to the State and Family.

In chapter **4 and Article 57**, the Constitution obligates the state to take measures to ensure Older Persons’ participation, personal development, dignity, respect and protection from abuse; and together with the family, the obligation to provide care and reasonable assistance to Older Persons.

Article 10 (2) (b) underlines the states obligation to protect Older Persons together with other marginalized groups; whereas **Article 21 (3)** obligates State organs and public officers to address the needs of Older Persons and other vulnerable groups.

Article 27 (4) promotes and safeguards equality and non-discrimination of Older Persons based on age, whereas **Article 43 (3)** obligates the state to provide appropriate social security to needy Older

Persons. **Article 43 (1) (f)** states that every person has the right to education and this includes older persons as well.

The government has a policy for older persons; The *National Policy on Older Persons and Ageing* (2018), and *Kenya National Social Protection Policy* (2011). Both policies were developed through consultative processes that brought together a wide range of stakeholders including older persons themselves in conformity with the Kenyan Constitutional requirement Article 10(c) (*public participation in public policy making*)

The Government recognizes the role played by the Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations, Research Institutions and Older Persons Organizations for the successful implementation of the policy interventions that seek to address and promote the rights of older persons in Kenya.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

As I Conclude it is my honor and privilege to officially open this workshop and Wish you fruitful deliberations on the issues affecting the older Persons.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.