

## **Social protection's role in enhancing food security and nutrition for greater resilience in Africa”**

### **Remarks delivered by Ambassador Claver Gatete**

The current external shocks impacting Africa have unveiled the low level of food security in the continent.

It started in 2008/2009 international financial crisis followed by 2010 energy crisis caused by what was termed as “Arab spring”, and the most recent impact of COVID-19 and war in Ukraine. All of them have had an impact on food security especially in Africa. In this context, social protection must be part of the equation to address the food security challenge. In particular, home-grown solutions to social protection are key to addressing this issue.

Such initiatives include skills development, public works to build skills and boost household incomes, income generating activities to promote off-farm activities, school feeding programs and other subsidized schemes such as fertilizers and seeds to households with the ability to invest in farm activities and linkages with market opportunities.

social protection is transformative in that it aims to improve the social-economic status of the society through the promotion of positive values, respect for rights, and family and community-based support systems.

Access to labor market opportunities and linking poor households or communities which are more prone to economic and life cycle shocks, to socio-economic opportunities is of paramount importance as part of the mechanisms of empowering the communities towards self-reliance.

Three examples in Rwanda to address the issue of social protection include Ubudehe social welfare, one-cow per poor family program and school feeding program.

Ubudehe Social Welfare is a Government of Rwanda poverty reduction initiative which provides communities with the skills and support necessary to engage in problem-solving and decision-making for their development. The programme helps citizens to use local institutions to achieve goals set by the community. These include public works such as construction of feeder roads in rural areas, terraces for agriculture and agriculture production for the poor.

Ubudehe approach puts emphasis on the graduation of families from extreme poverty. This initiative is cost effective and spreads resources to the most vulnerable communities across all social welfare categories.

The second initiative is the one cow per poor family project commonly referred to as as Girinka Program which was initiated to reduce poverty through dairy cattle farming; improving livelihoods

through increased milk consumption and income generation; and improving agricultural productivity using manure as fertilizer to increase agriculture productivity and increase incomes of poor farmers.

One Cup of Milk per Child Program was also introduced by Rwanda government as an implementation of the outcomes of the Integrated Development Program to prevent and reduce malnutrition among School going Children.

The Government of Rwanda has scaled up school feeding programs from pre-primary up to secondary schools, equipping schools with kitchens and cooking stoves, and providing a subsidy for each student's meal to complement parents' contributions. The government subsidizes 40% of the cost of the meal and the rest is contributed by parents.

On school feeding,

The Ministry of Education allocated capitation grants under the basic education programme to ensure that all Rwandan children are given an opportunity to attend school.

In 2019, the implementation of these measures in secondary schools lead to 680,000 students receiving governmental subsidy on school feeding.

In 2020, school feeding was scaled up to the entire education sector by subsidizing Public and government aided schools with 3,372,600 students which results in an increase of 396%.