



SPEECH BY Rt. Hon. MUGANWA HENRY KAJURA,
2ND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER & MINISTER OF PUBLIC
SERVICE

AT THE LAUNCH OF
EXPANDING SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME

SERENA HOTEL, KAMPALA

28TH SEPTEMBER 2010

ARRIVAL: 1.30 pm

**Honourable Ministers,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Ambassadors and High Commissioners,
Representative of UN Agencies,
Chairman of the National Planning Authority,
Religious and Traditional Leaders,
Representatives of Civil Society Organisations,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am extremely honored and delighted for the opportunity given to me to preside over this important function. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the Hon. Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development and his entire political and technical team for their effective leadership and capability to secure Government approval for the Expanding Social Protection programme.

The Expanding Social Protection (ESP) programme is a unique opportunity in our country's development process. It is targeting a distinctive group of people who are most vulnerable and poor. The programme approach, as I understand, is also unique in many respects. For example, it aims at delivering non-contributory pension, or old-age

grant, to older persons, and vulnerability grants to households which are trapped in chronic poverty. If it achieves sustainable results, it will usher in the national planning and budgeting processes a provision for allocating to older persons, persons with disabilities, orphans and other vulnerable children.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is true that many these vulnerable groups live in chronic poverty, a reality that should be unacceptable in Uganda. Many find themselves excluded from participating in development interventions due to their inability or by certain measures and requirements beyond their reach. This makes them more vulnerable to social and economic shocks. Government is therefore duty-bound to design strategic approaches to engage and empower them to contribute to the development of their country.

The category of people living in chronic poverty is substantial. Such people cannot access government social services, their children—including grandchildren—hardly complete primary school, can only achieve below average grades and their human capital potential is further weakened. The country cannot afford to sustain this situation. I

hope this ESP will give Government good lessons to enable us scale it to national level.

I am informed that Social Protections is a worldwide concern and is practiced across the globe including the developed nations. In the East African Community, Uganda was one of the two countries that had not implemented a clearly defined Social Protection programme. During this waiting, we picked lessons and experiences from our neighbours which can enable us avoid mistakes and implement an effective programme.

I have heard some people say that moving forward a social protection programme and comprehensive agenda requires high level political will and commitment. I am not sure whether anybody still doubts our Government commitment. True there was debate about issues related to social protection which Government deliberated on. I chaired a committee which studied and investigated those concerns in detail. Finally, Government approved the Expanding Social Protection Programme in order to improve the lives of the very poor. I believe that

Government's approval of this programme underlines the resolve and commitment to Social Protection agenda for this country.

In addition to Government approval of the Expanding Social Protection Programme, the National Development Plan, which provides the national planning framework of this country, also captures the social protection issues very well. I, therefore, urge the ministries—particularly those of Finance, Health, Education, Agriculture and Local Government—to work closely with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to ensure that social protection becomes a key strategy in their plans and activities to extend basic social services to the poor and vulnerable persons.

I note the absence of the social protection policy framework. Government needs a comprehensive policy to guide sectors and the NDP on strengthening social protection concerns in the planning and budgeting processes.

On behalf of the Government of Uganda, I want to extend my gratitude to the Governments of the UK and Ireland, as well as UNICEF, for their

support to the ESP. I call upon other development partners to consider the noble idea of a social protection fund and support it to enable government pool resources to implement the social protection agenda.

I thank all of you who have contributed, in one way or another, to realizing the ESP for Uganda.

WITH THESE FEW REMARKS, I HAVE THE PRIVILEGE AND HONOUR TO LAUNCH THE EXPANDING SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY.