

PRESS RELEASE

Government launches first-ever Investment Case for Social Protection

Investments in Social Protection represent one of the best investments to secure Uganda's future as a Middle Income Country and realize Vision 2040

KAMPALA, 22 November, 2016 – The Government of Uganda has launched its first-ever *Social Protection Investment Case*.

“This Investment Case clearly shows that investments in Social Protection greatly improve human development and labour productivity, especially among the poorest and most vulnerable populations,” said Hajati Janat Mukwaya, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

The *Investment Case* provides evidence on the positive impact social protection interventions have had on some vulnerable populations in Uganda to-date as well as the great potential it offers to the poorest and most vulnerable across Uganda if further investments in social protection programmes are made.

For example, the Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE), a grant scheme rolled out to vulnerable families and senior citizens in 15 districts from 2011-2015, has generated positive impacts on a wide range of outcomes, including:

- The number of households eating fewer than two meals per day ***fell more than twice as rapidly*** in SAGE districts than in comparable non-SAGE Districts
- Primary and secondary school attendance rates ***rose nearly three times more rapidly*** in SAGE Districts than in comparable non-SAGE Districts
- And the employment rate in SAGE Districts ***rose nearly fifty percent more rapidly*** than in non-SAGE Districts

Similarly, micro-simulations of potential social protection programmes targeting different vulnerable groups such as mothers, young children, persons with disabilities and older persons, also show positive outcomes.

In the case of a potential Universal Health Care grant targeting pregnant and lactating women as well as children under the age of 5, projected benefits include a reduced likelihood of maternal and Under-5 mortality and orphan hood, increased cognitive development of young children, and long term economic competitiveness due to improved human capital development.

In the case of a potential Child Support Grant benefitting poor children up to two years of age, for every 1% of GDP spent, such a grant is projected to yield a 33% reduction in the poverty gap, representing the most effective programme design of all the micro-simulations.

And for a Universal Child Support Grant benefitting all children up to eight years of age, a 67% decrease in the poverty gap is possible.

“The evidence is irrefutable, social protection programmes targeting children, especially the most vulnerable, have an extraordinary impact on the health, well-being and future potential of the children that benefit from them,” said Mrs. Aida Girma, UNICEF Representative in Uganda.

“From reduced child mortality, to improved nutrition, to enhanced cognitive development, to better learning outcomes, among other important outcomes for children, child-sensitive social protection interventions have an impact on the current and future well-being of the child – and country - that few other interventions can match.”

The *Social Protection Investment Case* is an important tool in supporting the Government achieve its goal of reducing poverty and vulnerability – including to the 55 per cent of children under 5 years of age who live in poverty and experience multiple deprivations - as stated in the Poverty Eradication Action Plan and in the National Development Plan (NDP) II.

“Considering social protection is a vital tool for poverty reduction and redefining Uganda’s capacity for economic growth, we must now prioritize investments in the most impactful Social Protection interventions, which this investment case clearly shows will be a key contributor to realizing Uganda’s vision of becoming an upper middle-income country by 2040,” concluded Hajati Janat Mukwaya, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

The *Social Protection Investment Case* was supported by DFID, Irish Aid and UNICEF.

Background

The National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) and Programme Plan of Interventions were approved by the Cabinet in November 2015. The Policy is an integral part of the Uganda Vision 2040 which underscores the importance of social protection in addressing risks and vulnerabilities. Social Protection has also been integrated into the country’s Second National Development Plan (NDP II) 2015/16-2020/21. In addition, the Sustainable Development Goals/ Agenda 2030 has emphasized social protection as a core function of development policy.

The Government of Uganda under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) has been implementing the Expanding Social Protection Programme since June 2010 and has undertaken the rollout of the Senior Citizens Grant to all districts beginning with 55 by 2020.

The core of the Ugandan social protection system includes direct income support programmes, which provide small but regular transfers to targeted individuals and households and guarantee a minimum level of income security.

The Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE) programme has registered a number of achievements in the districts of implementation. For instance, research findings indicate that the number of households eating fewer than two meals per day, fell more than twice as rapidly in SAGE districts than in comparable non-SAGE districts; primary and secondary school attendance rates rose nearly three times more rapidly in SAGE than in non-SAGE districts and the employment rate in SAGE districts rose nearly fifty percent more rapidly than in non-SAGE districts.

About UNICEF

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere.

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