

## **Role of LC1s revised in SAGE Implementation**

In a bid to streamline the ESP Programme to Government sustainability, the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development has revised the role of local councils (LC1) in the implementation of the SAGE Programme.

Pius Bigirimana, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development in a letter to Chief Administratives Officers, said, "As you may already be aware, in August 2015, the Government announced a phased roll out of the Senior Citizens Grants/Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) scheme. The Plan is to roll out the grants to additional districts over 5 years (2015-2020). "

"This roll out," he said, "is part of the second Phase of the Expanding Social Protection Programme (ESPII). The Programme Management Unit (PMU) of the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development is working to complete the transition of the Programme from the pilot (ESPI) to ESPII. Core to this transition is the alignment of the Programme towards more Government takeover and ownership. ESPII is therefore pursuing more efficiency and sustainability."

He said some of the efforts in this direction included use of national ID data for targeting and registration of beneficiaries and the gains that are beginning to emerge from these realignments include;

- a) Targeting and registration of beneficiaries using data from NIRA significantly reduces the time local council leaders require in identification and registration of beneficiaries. The role of LCs and PDCs is now limited only to supporting verification of beneficiaries already identified from NIRA data.
- b) Payment of grants using a bank (Postbank) gives beneficiaries full control of their accounts, there is no much effort required to monitor payments processes (as was the case with Mobile money agents).

Bigirimana said in light of the above, the PMU decided to restructure the various roles of the various leaders in the delivery of the grants as follows:

- Death reporting (hitherto performed by the LCs) is now merged into the quality assurance roles of the sub county CDOs and Parish Chiefs, who will now mainstream this function into their existing schedules (which have lessened owing to the NIRA and PBU processes above).
- The role of the LCs and PDCs will now be limited to supporting verification only as and when need arises. This therefore also means that their remuneration is accordingly revised from regular payments to on demand payments, as and when they are requested to play a role.
- However, the general role of the LCs and PDCs that they perform across all Government Programmes and activities such as communication (passing information to communities) and mobilization of communities remains unchanged.

“This letter is therefore to inform you and request you to accordingly communicate to all the SAGE implementation parties concerned. The team from the PMU will work with the District Community Development Officer and Senior Community Development Officer in charge of SAGE to ensure a seamless transition in this regard,” he wrote.