



AFRICAN UNION

INTERGOVERNMENTAL REGIONAL CONFERENCE

***A transformative agenda for the 21st Century:
Examining the case for basic social protection in Africa***

20TH-23RD MARCH 2006

SOCIAL PROTECTION – A TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA

THE LIVINGSTONE CALL FOR ACTION

The Government of the Republic of Zambia co-hosted with African Union an intergovernmental conference on social protection from 21 – 23rd March 2006 in Livingstone. The event brought together ministers and senior representatives from 13 African countries, (Ethiopia, Kenya Lesotho, Madagascar Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) together with Brazil, development partners, UN agencies and NGOs.

The conference discussed measures for protecting the poorest in Africa. The conference noted with concern the continuing high levels of poverty in Africa and the likelihood that the Millennium Development Goals will not be reached in the region unless development strategies incorporate direct action to enhance social development in line with the 2004 Ouagadougou Outcome (Summit of African Union's Heads of States and Governments on Employment and Poverty Alleviation), and the African Union social policy framework.

In his opening address, His Excellency Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa SC, the President of the Republic of Zambia, noted that social protection is a basic human right. Social protection directly tackles poverty, contributes to economic growth and stimulates local markets. The President also noted that providing social protection in the form of social transfers is affordable in African countries with the resources currently available.

The conference heard a keynote address from the African Union Representative as well as overviews from Tanzania, Lesotho, Zambia, the ILO and DFID. The conference also heard presentations from individual countries' experience on social protection. The delegates also had the opportunity to visit the pilot Cash Transfer Scheme in Kalomo District.

The conference noted that:

- Social protection is both a rights and an empowerment agenda.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights conventions establish that social security for all and social protection for the vulnerable is a basic human right.
- The guarantee of basic social protection strengthens the social contract between the state and citizens, enhancing social cohesion.
- Considerable evidence exists that social transfers have played a key role in reducing poverty and promoting growth.
- A sustainable basic package of social transfers is affordable within current resources of governments and international development partners.
- Transfers, when complemented with other social services, are a way to directly reduce poverty and inequality.
- Addressing generalised insecurity and inequality through social protection is proven to be an integral part of the growth agenda, particularly when provided alongside services promoting economic activity.
- The provision of cash directly to poor people enhances economic growth. Transfers are used for both investment and consumption.
- The provision of transfers increases human capital by helping people to keep healthy educate their children, and support HIV/AIDS affected families.
- Transfers can stimulate local markets, benefiting the whole communities.

Delegates called for

- Greater cooperation between African and other countries in the sharing and exchange of information, as well as experiences and action on social protection and cash transfers.
- Social transfer programmes, including the social pension and social transfers to vulnerable children, older persons and people with disabilities and households to be a more utilised policy option in African countries.
- National and international commitment to social protection, and to the building of consensus within different Ministries and institutional coordination in order to agree national plans.
- African governments to put together costed national social transfer plans within 2/3 years that are integrated within National Development Plans and within National Budgets, and that development partners can supplement.
- Increased investment in institutional and human resource capacity and accountability systems.
- Reliable long term funding for social protection, both from national budgets and development partners.
- The institutionalization of a bi-annual conference on social protection under the auspices of the African Union.

**LIVINGSTONE – ZAMBIA
MARCH 23RD , 2006**