



**SOCIAL PROTECTION WEEK**  
**COMMUNIQUE - MALAWI PLATFORM FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION**  
**19 JUNE, 2018**

## **Background**

The Malawi Platform for Social Protection is a network of organizations and individuals operating at national and district levels aimed at strengthening commitment to promoting and strengthening the social contract between the state and the citizens. The Platform promotes active engagement of civil society in the shaping of social protection policies, programmes, and practices in Malawi.

The Malawi Platform for Social Protection is a composition of 86 local and International organizations working towards improvement and enhancement of lives and livelihoods of the poor, marginalized and vulnerable Malawian Population.

The Platform engages in advocacy work at all governance levels to enhance the participation of CSOs in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of social protection policies and programmes in Malawi.

The formulation of the National Social Support Policy by Government, evolved over a long period of time through elaborate participatory processes. Civil Society Organizations were greatly involved at every development stage, however their strong voice as a Civil Society Platform on Social Protection, slowly went down when most of the active CSO narrowed down their operations and therefore, requires to be revived.

## **Preamble**

We, the representatives of the Malawi Platform for Social Protection, a national civil society movement with members that implement social protection- meeting in Lilongwe at BICC on 18 June 2018, with inputs from platform members from across Malawi, agree to reinforce national solidarity by ensuring fair, equitable and responsive social protection in a sustainable manner to citizens of Malawi.

## **Statement Premise**

- Noting the strength of the platform in community mobilization, evidence-based monitoring and advocacy at local, regional, national and international levels with clear demands based on peoples' voices
- Understanding that the five pillars of the Malawi National Social Support Programme II offer hope for harmonised social protection programmes in Malawi
- Noting that MGDS III highlights social protection through its five pillars
- Given the context of inequalities in Malawi focused on gender inequalities and exclusion of socially excluded people, including women, people living with HIV & AIDS, vulnerable children, the elderly citizens and people living with disability.
- Reflecting on African Union's leadership on Agenda 2063 social aspect, Social Policy Framework for Africa ( 2009), Social Protection Plan for the Informal Economy and Rural Workers (SPIREWORK) (2011), and Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development (Ouaga +10) (2015), among others
- Realising that Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer the hope of a future where people live in harmony on a safe, sustainable planet, with goals on inequalities, peace, decent work, justice and

transparency while also vowing to end violence against women and children, human trafficking and dangerous climate change.

- Learning from implementation successes and challenges that accompanied the Malawi National Social Support Programme I from local to national levels

### **The Platform's commitment towards MNSSP II and social protection in general**

As a platform, we commit to:

- a. Ensure that the slogan "leave no one behind" is properly reflected in all social protection intervention at local and national levels.
- b. Track implementation of programmes from grassroots to national level through monitoring, evaluation and learning
- c. Complement efforts through implementation of programmes by ensuring that all CSO social protection interventions are aligned to MNSSP II
- d. Advance advocacy on frameworks and policies around social protection
- e. Raise awareness on MNSSP II for citizens
- f. Ensure compliance in the implementation of policies for social protection
- g. Mobilise fellow CSOs to actively participate in all social protection interventions at all levels of the community through implementation of programmes and advocacy

Our commitment to engaging in the implementation of the MNSSP II is further structured around **four key strategies**:

#### **Strategy 1. Enhancing Outreach and Promoting Awareness**

Our observation has proved that lack of awareness among citizens about their rights and the mechanisms to exert them is a contributing factor to limited implementation of government programmes, including the MNSSP I. Lack of adequate communication strategies and channels often leads to insufficient understanding of the way social protection programmes should operate, which in turn could fuel mistrust and social tension.

**We commit** to make use of our presence at local level and practice of work with the local government to establish effective and permanent communication channels to reach out to citizens, particularly those that are most vulnerable and marginalized, with clear and accessible information about social protection programmes

**We commit** to actively participate in the development of a grievance and complaints mechanisms that provide beneficiaries means to express their concerns about how social protection programmes are implemented, and to participate with Government in addressing those concerns, complaints and appeals, whenever possible at local level.

**We commit** to create opportunities for vulnerable populations and their organizations to build up skills and access to information about their rights, thereby providing them with the tools they need to join the dialogue on the social protection system they need

## **Strategy 2. Contribute to Service Delivery and Programme Implementation**

CSOs in Malawi have a critical role to play in strengthening the implementation of Social Support Programmes by participating directly to service delivery, and contributing to the provision of complementary services, knowledge development, promotion and information.

Building strong coalitions of trusted partners and stakeholders working for and with vulnerable and marginalized groups for purposes of effective and improved service delivery is core to the mandate of the Social Protection Platform.

Despite existing practice of collaboration with Local Government and the expertise that some CSOs have, lack of coordination, collaboration and communication among stakeholders retards the progress of social protection program in Malawi.

**We commit** to being true agents for Development, Providing local communities with the required tools and means to engage in the strategic planning and implementation of social Protection programs.

**We commit** to aligning CSO social protection programmes to the MNSSP II as a way of contributing towards harmonisation of efforts at local and national level

**We commit to** engage other related sectors for instance DODMA, local government and community and social welfare to prioritize or mainstream social protection.

**We commit** to ensure effective representation and participation of CSOs at National and Technical Steering Committee levels for social protection, and active participation of CSOs selected by the District CSO Network in the District Social Protection Committees, Area Social Support committee and community Social Support Committees

## **Strategy 3. Monitoring and Accountability**

CSOs play a critical role in provide checks and balances and feedback mechanisms to the government on implementation gaps and possible mechanisms of addressing the gaps. Strengthening transparency and accountability in the implementation of SP interventions, is a way to promote good governance, effectiveness, openness and responsiveness of both state and non-state actors participating in the implementation of the MSSP II.

**We commit** to monitor the implementation of Social Support Programmes in Malawi for the benefit of the beneficiaries, government, development partners/donors across the country through action research, documentation of best practices, and social accountability tools

**We commit** to develop community monitoring mechanisms of various SP programmes in an effort to collaboratively support government and development partners on successes and challenges

**We commit** to bridge between citizens/beneficiaries and the state, development partners and facilitate constructive dialogue for the betterment of programme implementation by providing oversight and assurance that programmes are implemented as they should

#### **Strategy 4. Advocacy and Lobbying**

Advocacy and lobbying is a critical function for Civil Society to perform. It reminds policy makers and implementers on their expected roles and performance. It helps to identify gaps and areas that need improvement in policies, practices and systems.

Through advocacy and lobbying, CSOs add value to the social protection debate by providing alternative voice and options, by representing the instances of citizens and fostering dialogue between citizens and the duty bearers, by making existing strategies and plans more comprehensive as they reflect a broader set of interests.

**We commit** to facilitate the independent review and monitoring of the MNSSP budget and implementation plan throughout the budget cycle

**We commit** to identify unaddressed problems and bringing them to public attention, in giving voice to the wide range of social and community interests and concerns, by engaging the community, district authorities, executive and the parliament.

**We commit** to influence effective policy implementation for the realization of adequate resource mobilization and distribution for the benefit of the poor and marginalized groups including OVC, older persons and women in Malawi.

**We already advocate** Government to consider taking action on the following:

- a. Increase amount for social protection programs to match living conditions
- b. Consider migrating from the current targeted social protection programmes to universal social protection
- c. Ensure sustainable financing of all social protection interventions, by ensuring Government of Malawi begins to prioritize social protection interventions under MNSSP II in the budget as a way of sustaining the interventions beyond the life span of the programme

#### **Conclusion**

Even though the state carries the main responsibility for providing social security systems, The Platform feels that the support of civil society in the implementation of social Protection programmes is crucial and can make a difference. ILO Recommendation 202 concerning National Floors of Social Protection explicitly mentions the involvement of CSOs as partners for the national dialogue and the monitoring process for the development of social protection policies and systems that are truly “nationally defined”. The platforms stand ready to engage in the challenge.

Signed this day: 19 June, 2018

Andrew Kavala

**PLATFORM CHAIRPERSON**

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