



PRESS RELEASE

AFRICAN HOME-GROWN SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS ACHIEVING POSITIVE POVERTY REDUCTION OUTCOMES

Cape Town, South Africa 28 APRIL 2014- African states are leading the way in developing “home-grown” social protection systems best-suited for their contexts (such as the widespread impact of HIV/Aids), which are not just reducing poverty, but also contributing to positive outcomes in education, health, food, security, nutrition and helping adolescents to make healthier transitions to adulthood.

Over the last decade African countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Algeria, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and others have made huge strides in implementing social protection programmes to help children and families realize their rights to basic social services and to an adequate standard of living.

Addressing the participants of the consultation which include experts from African Union member states, UNICEF and other the United Nations and international organisations, and civil society, H.E. Dr. Mustapha Kaloko, Commissioner, of the Department of Social Affairs at the African Union Commission, said that social protection programmes are the basis for transformation and economic inclusion. He highlighted African Union frameworks, policies and programmes that address the welfare of children while enhancing their rights for a bright future, such as the Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, SPIREWORK (which deals with Social Protection for workers in the rural and the informal economy) Cost of Hunger in Africa (COHA), the Campaign for Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA), the Campaign on Harmful Traditional Practices and a new campaign to be launched against child marriage.

The AU expert consultation is hosted by the South African Government in collaboration with the African Union Commission and UNICEF. South Africa has the largest social assistance system on the continent. Over the last two decades, coverage has grown from 2.6 million South Africans in 1994 to an estimated 16 million people.

H.E. Ms. Bathabile Dlamini, Minister of Social Development in South Africa said that in spite of the strong economic growth in Africa and progress registered, the continent still has considerable challenges to overcome to ensure that no African child falls out of the safety net.

The three day meeting seeks to take stock of progress made by African countries in implementing social protection programmes and ways in which these can be scaled up. Recommendations from the

meeting will be taken to the AU Conference of Ministers of AU Social Protection Development Ministerial meeting in Addis Ababa at the end of May.

Social protection is a human right and African governments are committed to strengthening social protection because it helps to ensure that children living in poverty today do not continue to live in poverty as adults tomorrow said Jeffrey O'Malley, Director, Division of Policy and Strategy at UNICEF.

For more information or an interview, please contact:

Wynne Musabayana Deputy Head of Communication African Union Commission Email: musabayanaw@africa-union.org
+27767872536

Lumka Oliphant. Spokesperson Department of Social Development LumkaO@gov.co.za +27834848067

Anthony Mwangi Public Affairs Manager UNICEF Liaison Office to the AU/ECA amwangi@unicef.org

Suzanne Beukes Communication Officer UNICEF Africa Services Unit sambeukes@unicef.org +27794955935