



Republic of Kenya

**MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION
OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY**

SPEECH BY

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**DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE SUPPORT NEEDS
ASSESSMENT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
AND THEIR PRIMARY CAREGIVERS**

ON 16TH OCTOBER 2023

AT

SERENA HOTEL

Principal Secretary, Ministry of Education

Country Director, UNICEF

Country Director, WFP

Development Director, FCDO

Representative, USAID

Chief Executive Office, Council of Governors

Director General,

Board Members of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities

Dr. Patrick Amoth, Director General of Health,

Mr. Macdonald Obudhoh, Director General, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

Mr. Harun M. Hassan, Executive Director, National Council for Persons with Disabilities,

Representatives of Organizations of and for Persons with Disabilities,

Representatives from Government Ministries, Counties, Departments & Agencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me greatly pleasure to welcome all of you here today to the much-awaited launch of the **support needs of persons with disabilities and their primary caregivers**. This assessment is the first of its kind to be initiated in Africa and is one of the strategies identified towards ensuring that persons with disabilities as well as their caregivers have accesses to the necessary community support and care that enable them to participate and live independently in the community.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kenya has ratified several international conventions that require the extension of social security to specific categories of the population including the right to social security for all children, found in the **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** and the right to social protection for all persons with disabilities, stipulated in the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**. The Convention marks a “**paradigm shift**” in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities where they are not viewed as objects of charity rather as subjects with rights who can claim those rights and make decisions for their lives based on their free will and informed consent as well as being active members of society.

Article 19 and **Article 28** of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) obligates member states to ensure that persons with disabilities have an **equal choice to live independently in the community**, and that they have **access to adequate standard of living and social protection** including appropriate and affordable

services, assistive devices, and other assistance for disability related needs.

It is also important to note that Kenya has also ratified the **African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**. The Protocol's salient features offer a wide range of protection of persons with disabilities and fosters constitutionalism while adding value to the promotion of their rights within the African context.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The **Constitution of Kenya** Article 43 states that 'Every person has a right to social security and further stipulates that, 'The State shall provide appropriate social security to persons who are unable to support themselves and their dependants'.

In this regard, My Ministry has endeared to improve the livelihoods and economically empower persons with disabilities by putting in place policies and measures that are disability specific in nature such as the **provision of cash transfer households with persons with disabilities who require 24-hour care**.

Under the Inua Jamii Cash Transfer Programme, 2,000 Kenya Shillings is paid monthly to enhance the capacities of care givers through cash transfers and as such, improve the livelihoods of persons with severe disabilities as well as reduce the disability related costs on households.

In recent months, My Ministry through the State Department for Social Protection and Senior Citizen Affairs and National Council for Persons with Disabilities has been engaged in a process to increase the number of beneficiaries by **eighteen thousand** as well as replace those who have

since exited the programme due to natural attrition. The programme in the currently supporting **37,553 households**.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you may be aware, my Ministry has been working on the review of the **Persons with Disabilities Act, 2003**, to align it with the constitution of Kenya, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the realities of the present times. In the month of April this year, my office resubmitted the Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2021 to the National assembly following the lapse of the 12th Parliament.

I am happy to state that the **Persons with Disabilities Bill No. 26 of 2023** was **tabled before the National Assembly on 12th June 2023** and is awaiting due processes. The Bill clearly spells out the Right to Independent living by every person with disability and the right to access a range of in-home residential and other support services including personal assistants, necessary to support living and inclusion in society on an equal basis with others.

It is my desire to have this new law for persons with disabilities before the end of this financial year.

I therefore once again **commit my full support** in this process by making the needed follow ups with the Parliament.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The government committed to promote the collection of accurate data on persons with disability, disaggregated by gender, age, disability and geographic location for use in planning during the **Global Disability Summit**.

This commitment was realized during **the 2019 National Housing and Population Census**, in which the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics made use of the Washington Group Short Set Questions to collect data on persons with disabilities and we **congratulate** them for this milestone.

According to the 2019 Census, the population of persons with disabilities above the age of 5 years stands at **nine hundred and eighteen thousand, two hundred and seventy persons (918, 270)**. This constitutes about 2% of our total population. This is a huge population that needs to be considered in planning towards accessible education and access to appropriate, affordable, available assistive technologies and devices as well as disability related support.

Ladies and gentlemen

Despite these efforts of the Government of Kenya to address the wellbeing of persons with disabilities, **significant barriers still exist** due to lack of adequate information to provide insight into the actual support needs of persons with disabilities and those of their caregivers. This gap necessitated the Ministry, and its partners lead by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics to invest in this assessment to guide the Government in designing effective interventions.

As you are aware the assessment utilized both the **Washington Group Extended Set Questions** as well as the **Child Functioning Module** to wholistically capture each domain of disability and the necessary support required to enable them function and participate in the community. This was based on the realization that diverse persons with disabilities require different interventions to support their participation.

Ladies and gentlemen

Some of the key issues that the assessment has **highlighted** is that fact that all persons with disabilities require support services regardless of the disability. In addition, most of the primary caregivers were heads of households or family members with some of them being single parents hence a high likelihood of double burden and loss of income since they forego income generating activities for caring services.

The double burden that caregivers feel has at times led to family disintegration and children and adults with disabilities being institutionalized. It is therefore imperative for us all to upgrade the debate on “**de-institutionalization**” where possible and ensure families are empowered through **parenting programmes** towards **reintegration of families**.

Ladies and gentlemen

My Ministry is keen on developing programmes that support persons with disabilities and their primary caregivers, through **provision of respite care services** and strengthening **psychosocial support systems** currently, offered by our lay volunteer counsellors and community-based rehabilitation volunteers. There is a great need to actively support **care reforms** and work around deinstitutionalization and inclusion in the community by ensuring **community support services** are available to all persons with disabilities.

The recommendations drawn from the Assessment **will continually inform the design of social protection schemes to ensure inclusion of all domains of disabilities**.

Ladies and gentlemen

It is good to note that the Ministry has already begun implementing some of the recommendations stated in the support needs assessment report as an indication to our commitment towards disability inclusion.

One, to address the disability data gaps, my Ministry in collaboration with Kenya National Bureau of Statistics is working with the National Council for Persons with Disabilities within a Technical Working Group (TWG) to spearhead the administrative data collection and compilation process. We have begun the process towards undertaking the **National Disability Survey** to be undertaken next year. The Survey will incorporate components of the assessment to capture data from all the 47 counties.

Two, on the legislative front, the Government is committed to promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and my Ministry is currently working to developing **the National Disability Policy for Persons with Disabilities**. The goal of the policy is to promote the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in all societal activities towards achievement of national development targets.

It is therefore timely that the findings of this assessment shall give reliable data to guide on establishing actionable policy directives on community-based support and services that will ensure persons with disabilities and their caregivers are included and receive the necessary support to participate and live independently in the community.

Three, the State Department for Social Protection and Senior Citizen Affairs through the **Directorate of Social Development and in partnership with UNICEF** have initiated work on exploring policy options to develop community care and support systems based, in part,

on the results support need assessment. The objective of the 12- 18 months project is the strengthening of the policy frameworks in Kenya towards **development of gender responsive and disability inclusive community support and care system** in collaboration with national stakeholders through participatory development of a road map.

Ladies and gentlemen

We are committed to implementing the recommendations of this report and as our partners in this sphere, we shall continually call on your technical expertise and furthermore request your financial support considering the vast amounts of resources required by the government to ensure that persons with disabilities are accounted for and participate equally in every aspect of life.

Ladies and gentlemen

I am thankful for the consolidated efforts by the State Department for Social Protection and Senior Citizen Affairs, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, Kenya Association of Intellectually Handicapped, Christian Blind Mission, Danish Institute for Human Rights, United Nations Children Fund, Sweden Government Agency for Development Cooperation, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, United Nations Partnership on Persons with Disabilities and World Food Program for the technical and financial support that led to the successful completion of this assessment.

In conclusion and in the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals clarion call of *“leave no one behind”*, the Country needs to move a notch higher to disability inclusion in which all sectors both in public and private sector undertake inclusive planning from the development to

implementation cycles of any policy or program thus ensuring that persons with disabilities enjoy equal rights and privileges like all other persons.

It is my believe that recommendations from this report once implemented will ensure the full participation of persons with disabilities in the social life of their families and communities and furthermore provide support and assistance to enable them access social opportunities while challenging stigma and discrimination to bring about positive social change.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is now my pleasure to officially launch the **support needs assessment report for persons with disabilities and their primary care givers** on this day of **Monday, 16th October 2023**. The report is instrumental in guiding both state and non-state actors on critical issues that will ensure that persons with disabilities are accorded the required support needs that enable them to be included and to participate fully in the national agenda to equally enjoy all human rights like others in society.

Thank you!