



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

SPEECH BY

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THE CABINET SECRETARY

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

**DURING THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER
PERSONS ON 3RD OCTOBER, 2023 IN LAIKIPIA
COUNTY**

The Governor of Laikipia County Your Excellency Joshua Irungu EGH,

The Country Director HelpAge International & Representatives from other Development Partners;

Representatives from Organizations of Older Persons;

Representatives from Government Ministries, Departments & Agencies,

Representatives from the County Government of Laikipia;

Ministry Staff,

Members of the Fourth Estate,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies& Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to join you all on this auspicious occasion as we mark the 2023 International Day of Older Persons. This year's celebrations marks the 33rd commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Older Persons since inception in 1990.

This Day serves as a **call-to-action** for Governments, organizations, and communities to design and carry out more effective strategies, laws and policies to support older persons; work together to promote their rights and create enabling environments where older persons can participate and live in dignity.

In recognition of the milestones Kenya has made and addressing this year's theme ***“Fulfilling the Promises of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for Older Persons: Across Generations.”***

Ladies & Gentlemen,

On Older Persons and Development

The Government in partnership with various non-state actors, is currently implementing a number of interventions within the National Policy on Older Persons and Ageing (2018) that offer reasonable care and assistance to older persons.

Additionally, the Government has taken substantial steps in promoting entrepreneurship among women and older persons through initiatives such as the Hustler Fund and Women Enterprise Fund, which are integral components of Kenya Vision 2030. These funds have not only provided affordable credit to enterprises owned by older persons but have also offered valuable business development services, including market support, entrepreneurship training, and skill enhancement.

Furthermore, the Government of Kenya has committed a substantial amount of Ksh. 50 billion (approximately USD 400 million) annually for the next five years through the Hustler Fund. This commitment is aimed at ensuring that Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) have full access to affordable financing options, such as SACCOs. In addition, the Government is actively promoting the 'Buy Kenya Build Kenya' (BKBK) initiative to support locally manufactured products, including those produced by older persons.

On Social Protection

The National Social Protection Policy (2011) lays out a comprehensive framework for the social protection sector in Kenya. This policy strives to ensure that every Kenyan lives with dignity and can harness their human potential for social and economic development.

It encompasses various forms of support, including family and child benefits, unemployment benefits, disability benefits, and an old-age pension. Moreover, it establishes a safety net for those who remain unsupported.

To address the needs of vulnerable older persons, the Government of Kenya is executing the Older Persons Cash Transfer (OPCT) program. We have progressively increased our spending on social protection from 0.8 percent of GDP in 2014 to 1.5 percent. In this current fiscal year, we have allocated Kshs. 26 billion for the Inua Jamii Programme of which over Kshs. 19 billion is Older Persons Cash Transfer.

The State Department for Social Protection and Senior Citizen Affairs has recently finalized phase I of registering new beneficiaries into the Programme where a total of five hundred thousand new beneficiaries across the 3 cash transfer categories of the Inua Jamii Programme will be on boarded in this current Financial Year and a further one million beneficiaries in the next two consecutive FYs.

In 2021, the Ministry launched the Kirinyaga Rescue Centre for Older Persons, which is currently providing a safe haven and temporary shelter to older persons who are victims of abuse and neglect. We are also constructing a similar center in Kilifi County, to address the prevalent cases of elder abuse in that region.

On Advancing Health and Well-being into Old Age

Kenya is implementing the Kenya Health Policy (2014–2030) which makes provision for achieving universal healthcare. Some of the key achievement Kenya has made towards achieving Universal Health Care, include among others Health insurance subsidies through NHIF targeting vulnerable groups.

On Ensuring Enabling and Supportive Environments for Older Persons and Ageing

As a matter of utmost priority this fiscal year, the State Department for Social Protection and Senior Citizen Affairs is leading the development of a comprehensive Older Persons Bill. Once this bill becomes law, it will safeguard the rights of older persons, ensuring their access to health, well-being, participation, personal development, dignity, care and reasonable assistance, and protection from abuse as mandated by Article 57 of the Constitution of Kenya.

To leave no one behind, the National Social Protection Secretariat has introduced an Enhanced Social Registry, an information system and platform that enlists and connects vulnerable individuals, including older persons, to social, economic, and employment opportunities.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

As I conclude, I want to appreciate all Older Persons Organizations and stakeholders who contributed towards the successful planning and celebration of this year's International Day of Older Persons.

Specifically, I also want to appreciate the County Government of Laikipia for hosting this year's celebrations. It is my commitment that my Ministry will continue to collaborate with you in implementing programs and interventions that address the plight of the older persons.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.