



**OPENING STATEMENT BY HON. NANA OYE LITHUR, MINISTER OF  
GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL PROTECTION AT THE LAUNCH OF  
THE NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICY  
BANQUET HALL, STATE HOUSE  
MONDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2016**

**His Excellency, John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic Of  
Ghana,**

**Dr. Kwesi Botchwey, Chairman of NDPC,**

**Ministers and Deputy Ministers of State present here,**

**Hon. Members of Parliament,**

**Members of the Diplomatic core,**

**Representatives of Development Partners,**

**Nii Mei, Naa Mei**

**Members of the Press,**

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am honoured to welcome you all to this historic event. This is the first time Government and people of Ghana have initiated a holistic approach to the protection of the most vulnerable in our society. Our presence here today is in line with our social democratic credentials as a government that is deeply committed to the holistic development of its citizenry. The NDC manifesto



promised to introduce programs targeted at the poorest poor and to assist the vulnerable in society. And we are delivering exactly as promised.

Ladies and Gentlemen, by an Executive Instrument in January 2013 H.E. John Dramani Mahama created the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection with a three-fold mandate:

1. To ensure gender equality through gender mainstream considerations
2. To promote the welfare and protection of children and
3. Empower the vulnerable, excluded, aged and persons with disability through the use of social protection interventions to achieve national development.

Government's vision for social protection is to promote the well-being of Ghanaians through an integrated platform of effective social assistance, social and productive inclusion, social insurance, and financial access to social services. We aspire to mitigate and reduce vulnerabilities, close the inequality gap and ensure total inclusion for all Ghanaians.



Mr. Chairman, permit me to share with you the process of achieving our vision for social protection. As early as 2007, Government of Ghana developed a Social Protection Strategy with the goal of creating an all-inclusive society through the provision of sustainable mechanisms for the protection of persons living in situations of extreme poverty, vulnerability and exclusion.

Our journey in pursuit of this agenda continued with the rationalization study on social protection in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the Ministry of Finance. The study recommended the development of well defined structures, systems and processes to enhance coordination in targeting of beneficiaries, efficient coordination in implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as a sustainable financing mechanism.

Distinguished Guests, to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of the rationalisation study, MoGCSP in collaboration with other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA's) implementing social protection programmes prepared a memorandum for cabinet and



received approval to develop a National Social Protection Policy. The Policy was set to:

- 1) Address issues such as the establishment of a social protection floor for Ghana;
- 2) The development of a governance framework for the effective and efficient coordination of social protection at all levels;
- 3) Development of a sustainable financing mechanism and a monitoring and evaluation framework.

The recommendations also prescribed a legal framework to ensure the sustainability of social protection programmes in Ghana.

Following this stage, a cross-sectoral technical team was put together to develop the policy that we are about to launch today.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Government of Ghana under H. E. John Dramani Mahama through legal and policy arrangements has established strong systems and structures to protect the most vulnerable and excluded persons in our society. The Social Protection Policy that we are launching



today signifies the commitment of our social democratic Government to put people at the heart of our social protection commitments.

The Policy will deliver a well- coordinated, inter- sectorial social protection system enabling people to live in dignity through income support, livelihood empowerment and improved access to basic services. The Policy seeks to promote the wellbeing of Ghanaians through an integrated platform of effective social assistance, social inclusion, social insurance and financial access to social services. We are also collaborating with the Civil Society on social protection to ensure social accountability in the implementation of social protection programmes in Ghana.

The Policy anchors on our National Development Planning framework and draws from the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA II 2014-2017), the Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies 2014-2020 as well as a range of sectoral policies and programmes. It acknowledges Ghana's efforts at long-term development planning (LTDP) and aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



The technical and operational coordination of social protection initiatives rests with MoGCSP and is supported by the Social Protection Sector Working Group (SPSWG) and the Social Protection Inter-sectorial Technical Committee (SPiSTC). These bodies are the tools for facilitation and coordination of social protection delivery and exchange of experience.

I would like to commend the Social Protection Sector Working Group for how instrumental they have been in this journey. Government partnerships with civil society such as this one, is the way forward.

To build further on the Policy, Government has also developed a Social Protection Bill that is currently with the Attorney General's Department for consideration. The Bill and Policy will go to strengthen our legal environment in creating a stronger social protection framework that empowers and protect all persons.



Mr. Chairman, even as we launch the Policy today, Government has already made significant strides in the implementation of our social protection initiatives. The results are remarkable and evident for all to see.

Our Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty Programme (LEAP), developed in 2008 is a cash transfer programme that targets the extremely poor and vulnerable households. To ensure efficiency, we have restructured the intervention from a unit to a programme. From a total of 1,645 beneficiary households (21 districts) in 2008, we have increased to 146,074 (185 districts) as of June 2016. We hope to expand to 200,000 by close of this year and to 250,000 by early 2017. In addition, 52,082 Persons with Disabilities and 751 inmates of witch camps have benefited from the programme.

To further enhance transparency and efficiency of the programme we have introduced an electronic cash transfer to our payment system. Our LEAP 1000 which targets pregnant and lactating mothers with children less than a year addresses malnutrition and stunting among children.



**Mr. Chairman,** we have collaborated with the Ministries of Food and Agriculture; Employment and Labour Relations; and the Labour Intensive Works Programme to develop productive and financial inclusion interventions to facilitate the graduation of LEAP beneficiaries. Graduation from LEAP is our next major focus.

An impact assessment conducted by the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER) and the North Carolina University in 2012 revealed that the LEAP Programme has positively impacted on the education of children in terms of enrolment, grade repetition and absenteeism among others. LEAP, ladies and gentlemen, is leaping the poor out of poverty!

We recognize that access to quality healthcare is a fundamental human right and to ensure all citizens can enjoy this right, MoGCSP is collaborating with the National Health Insurance Authority to provide free biometric registration to vulnerable groups in our society. In this regard, we have achieved the following results:

- Over Eleven Thousand Eight Hundred **(11,800)** elderly women and men 65 years and above were registered in Greater Accra, Ashanti, Volta, Eastern, Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions;



- Eleven thousand two hundred and forty nine (**11,249**) inmates of the Kumasi, Nsawam, Tamale, Ankaful, Koforidua, Sekondi, Navrongo and Wa Prisons have been registered;
- Two thousand, eight hundred and eighty one (**2,881**) June 3<sup>rd</sup> Flood and fire affected persons in Accra and Six hundred and twenty five (**625**) in Ashaiman have been registered;
- Eighty two thousand, one hundred and fifty four (**82,154**) out of one hundred and forty six thousand, seven hundred and four (**146,704**) LEAP beneficiary households (**56%**) have been registered and benefiting from NHIS
- Two thousand (2,000) Persons with a Disability have been registered as of December 2015
- Registration of **1,728,681** million school children under school feeding is currently on- going

Distinguished Guests, our Labour Intensive Public Works Programme of the Ghana Social Opportunities Project (GSOP) is a Safety Net programme that government has been piloting in sixty (60) deprived districts since 2011. LIPW is increasing access to employment and income-earning opportunities to the rural poor and improving productive capacities of social



and economic infrastructure in low-income districts. As of December 2015, 140,604 unskilled beneficiaries had been employed under this programme. We project to reach 190,000 by mid-2017.

Our School Feeding Program is providing school children with healthy meals as well as boosting domestic food production. Currently, 1,728,681 in 216 districts are benefiting under this programme. Cabinet has also approved the National School Feeding Policy which will strengthen the effective operation of the programme. We have developed new procurement and contracting guidelines and School Feeding Caterers receive electronic payments.

Education is the cornerstone of any sustainable development practice. Our social protection interventions in the education sector such as the provision of free school uniforms and exercise books is increasing enrolment in schools at the basic level and growing our local manufacturing industry. Over 1,900,000 uniforms have been distributed to students in deprived districts throughout the country so far.

Mr. Chairman, our elderly persons have worked hard for the growth and



development of our great nation and it is therefore our duty to ensure they can live comfortably and are well taken care of. In 2015, we launched the Eban Elderly Welfare Card to facilitate their easy access to essential services. The Eban Card provides the elderly with 50 percent rebate on Metro Mass Transit Bus to any destination in Ghana. With this same card, our elderly are able to receive priority access to services in hospitals, banks and other public services. Since inception, 20,515 elderly persons have received the cards and are using them right now. We are projecting that, in all, a total of 25,000 will be registered nationwide by the end of 2016. The Ageing Policy has been launched and the first draft of the Ageing Bill has been finalized.

Our Government recognizes that an effective social protection system rests on reliable data. In collaboration with the World Bank therefore, we have established the Ghana National Household Registry to meet this need. The Unit is currently working on the development of a single registry database of extreme poor households to be used for beneficiary selection by all social protection interventions. This database adds to the legal and institutional framework our Government is putting in place to create an effective social protection regime in Ghana.



As Government, we are happy to be fulfilling our manifesto pledge of harmonizing existing social safety net initiatives into one agency to ensure efficiency and coordination. So far, we have seen great achievements in the lives of our beneficiaries.

I tell the story of Aneba Awumtumyiga, a person with disability who is a beneficiary of our LEAP Programme in the Wurania Community (Kassena Nankana West District, Upper East Region). Before enrolment, Aneba and her younger sister had no viable source of income and her sister had to drop out of school. With support from LEAP, Aneba is currently training in dressmaking and she is able to support her sister's education. Aneba has also invested in livestock rearing and spent part of her grant to repair her clutches. Aneba is one of the many whose life has been transformed.

Selorm Agbeko, a beneficiary of Ghana Social Opportunities Project (GSOP) was able to save money from his daily wage earnings to build a canoe for fishing. Out of his earnings from his fishing business, Agbeko is now able to cater for his wife, his elderly mother and the education of his



siblings. Ladies and Gentlemen, these stories reflect our deep commitment to protecting and empowering the most vulnerable in our society.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to His Excellency, John Dramani Mahama, for the strong leadership and vision to prioritize social protection in our development process.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is just the beginning. We are making Ghana, our beloved country, greater and stronger. Together, we are creating an empowered citizenry and an inclusive society.

Thank you for you kind attention.