

The Kanifing Resolutions on Social Protection-The Gambia

We the undersigned delegates of a social protection training for civil society organisations in The Gambia held at the National Malaria Control Programme in Kanifing from 11- 13 June, 2012 make the following resolutions.

We noted that:

1. Social protection supports social stability, poverty reduction and the socioeconomic development of the citizens and thus contributes to strong economic growth and development.
2. Social protection is a key tool to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE) to promote unified social justice and equity in The Gambia.
3. The Government of The Gambia is committed to reducing poverty and improving the well-being of its population. This is demonstrated in the government's Vision 2020 and other relevant national and international documents, which aim amongst others to "*ensure a decent standard of living for all*" and the development of the Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE) for the period 2012- 2015.
4. The Department of Social Welfare, which is the lead government institution responsible for the protection and promotion of the welfare of the poor, vulnerable and under privileged groups in the country, is making efforts to develop programmes designed to reduce poverty and population vulnerability by diminishing individuals' exposure to risk, and protecting the rights and welfare of under privileged groups.
5. The partnership between civil society and the government is crucial in scaling up social protection programmes and services in The Gambia. Civil society has a key role to play in supporting, informing and influencing policy processes and in developing programmes which complement those of government.
6. Lack of a unified national policy on social protection programmes makes the coordination, efficiency and effectiveness of social protection by various government ministries, civil society organisations and other actors difficult.

We recommend:

1. Developing a unified national policy on social protection to guide the design and implementation of appropriate social protection programmes in The Gambia.
2. Strengthening the involvement and participation of civil society organisations, private institutions and the public in the social protection debate in The Gambia. This must involve the target beneficiaries in social protection policy development and implementation at every level.
3. Fostering greater collaboration and participation among civil society organisations, government and other non-state actors in the development of social protection policy and strategies.
4. Improving legislation to support social protection policies and vulnerable groups, including but not limited to, children, women, older people, people with disabilities, the mentally ill, youth and the unemployed.
5. Promoting greater public and private investment in social protection.
6. Enhancing the capacity of actors in the field of social protection, both in terms of skills and resources to maximise their coverage and impact.
7. Establishing a social protection platform involving relevant civil society organisations that will engage government to move the social protection agenda in The Gambia forward.
8. In pursuant to recommendation No. 7 above, the delegates agree to select an interim committee that will draw up a constitution and facilitate the election of an Executive Committee of a national social protection platform in The Gambia. The Terms of Reference (TOR) of the interim committee is presented in Annex 1 of this resolution.

Dated 13 June, 2012 at Kanifing, The Gambia