

## **Government Disburses Ksh 166.9 million to support over 1.2 million vulnerable households to mitigate against COVID-19**

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**By Cheruiyot Korir**

The government has disbursed Kes.166.9 Billion to 1,233,129 poor households through the Inua Jamii Cash Transfer programmes that covers orphan and vulnerable children, older persons and persons with severe disabilities.

In the programmes, over 353,000 orphans and vulnerable children, 833,000 older persons and 47,000 persons with severe disabilities benefited from the cash transfer program that aims to give them purchasing power to access food, shelter and clothing.

Speaking at the KICC today during an advocacy conference on Urban safety net, and strengthening of Partnerships to advance safety net, the Cabinet Secretary for Labour and Social Protection, Mr Simon Chelugui said, the Government allocated Kes.10 billion as an emergency cash transfer programme in April this year to cushion the poor and vulnerable members of our society, who were not benefiting from the Inua Jamii Programme, to mitigate the negative effects of the pandemic.

Mr, Chelugui stressed that, the Social Protection is a Constitutional right for the vulnerable citizens and not a charity. He noted that, Social protection is not a cost but an investment saying studies have shown that economies perform better by investing in Social Protection and that greater investments in Social Assistance and Social Safety Nets programs are strong drivers to inclusive economic growth and development.

“Well-designed social safety nets open up productive and livelihood opportunities for these segments of the populations by addressing some of the barriers that facilitate inequality and inequity in the society” Observed Mr Chelugui.

The Cabinet Secretary said, the design of social protection programs that the government in collaboration with stakeholders was undertaking is provided for by the Constitution. He explained that, the various Social Assistance programmes is aimed at improving access to

healthcare, education, food security and nutrition and, affordable housing for the many vulnerable Kenyans.

He said, like many other parts of the world, COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating effects on Kenya economy, a situation he said has driven many individuals and households into poverty and exposed new vulnerable individuals in our societies.

He said, data from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) indicated that about 1.7 million Kenyans had lost their jobs both in the formal and informal economy, with the unemployment rate doubling from about 5.2% to 10.4% between March and September 2020. He explained that, the same data shows that about 3.2 million households are now in need of social assistance, out of which about 760,000 are in the informal settlements in major cities.

Among those in attendance were the Simon Mordue, Ambassador for the European Union, the Danish Ambassador to Kenya Ole Thonke, the UN Resident Co-ordinator, Mr Siddharth Chatterjeer and Oxfarm regional Director Lydia Zigomo among others