



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

**SPEECH BY  
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**DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING AND HANDING  
OVER OF THE CHILD PROTECTION UNIT IN KWALE  
COUNTY**

**1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY, 2021**

**Representatives from Plan International,**  
**Representatives from National Police Service,**  
**Representatives from the County Government of Kilifi,**  
**Representatives from Government Ministries, Departments**  
**and Agencies,**  
**Ministry Staff,**  
**Distinguished guests,**  
**Ladies and gentlemen**

**Good morning,**

It gives me great pleasure to join you today for the official opening of this Child Protection Unit. The Department of Children Services in collaboration with the National Police Service is mandated to ensure the rights and welfare of children both in contact and in conflict with the law is upheld while in Police custody

The Construction and completion of this unit comes at the right time especially now when the Country is grappling with covid 19 pandemic. This facility will enable children who are suspected to be in conflict with the law to be held in custody while observing the Ministry of Health guidelines on Covid 19.

Several legislations and conventions on children, including the Constitution of Kenya 2010, Article 53, stipulates that children should be held for a maximum of 24hrs and in separate facilities from adults and in conditions that take into account the child's sex and gender. Child Protection Units act as temporary protective holding facilities for children

during investigations. These facilities provide for children being held separately from suspected adult criminals or alleged offenders while at police stations.

All children cases that are brought to the Police station should be handled at the CPUs, in a professional and effective manner to ensure that the children, including children with special needs, access justice, their needs are met and their rights protected. Despite the enactment of the Legal Aid Act 2014 which provides for legal representation of child suspects, as Child Protection actors, we remain very concerned that a number of children in conflict with the law appear in court unrepresented.

A report on the special Task Force on Children Matters Chaired by Lady Justice Martha Koome which was handed over to the Chief Justice on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020, reveals that at different stages of the justice system, the rights and welfare of Children continue to be violated.

I therefore request advocates to step up and offer pro-bono services to our Children. This will ensure that children's rights are upheld and their cases are accelerated without unnecessary delay.

The State Department for Social Protection, Department of Children Services in collaboration with various development partners, has made efforts and developed 23 Child Protection Units which are located in various Police stations across the Country. This is indeed a very small number against the number of children who are apprehended on a daily basis. It is the desire of the Ministry and the National Police Service, to have a CPU in every Police station which is in the best interest of the child.

The Child Protection Unit concept, envisages that the data collected on cases affecting children reported at the police station, would be automated for ease of reference and distribution. The Units provide children with a child friendly environment where they can articulate their problems or discuss the issues affecting them, within a private setting.

I am pleased to inform you that the Children's bill, which is at an advanced staged has made provision for CPUs which will give the unit legal bases and further attract funding from both the government and civil Society. My Ministry will work closely with the Ministry of Interior, to ensure successful implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures for the CPUs

We acknowledge that Child Protection needs a multi sectoral approach as demonstrated here with the Construction of this Child Protection Unit by Plan International.

The Ministry is aware that Kwale County is a hotspot for child abuse, especially on cases such as Child marriages and teenage pregnancies. I take this opportunity to thank the National Police Service for the continued partnership with the Ministry on child Protection. I further urge the community to continue playing their role on community policing in an effort to eradicate this vice.

I also thank the Court Users Committee and Civil Society Organizations for the various roles they continue to play in Child protection, in order to ensure children's rights are protected and upheld and the formation of different policies and guidelines.

Last but not least, my sincere appreciation goes to Plan International for the financial support in construction of this Child Protection Unit, that is fully furnished and equipped. I am delighted to learn that the personnel who will be manning this unit have undergone rigorous training to ensure the rights and welfare of children are upheld and protected.

The Ministry looks forward to furthering this partnership with Plan International and other Civil Society organizations for the best interest of our children.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** Once again, It is my pleasure to officially receive the Child Protection Unit from Plan International, and hand it over to the National Police Service.

**THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU**