

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



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

REMARKS BY

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**THE MINISTERIAL SESSION OF THE 5TH MEETING OF THE
SECTORAL COUNCIL ON GENDER, YOUTH, CHILDREN,
SOCIAL PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**HELD ON
11TH JUNE 2021**

ARUSHA, TANZANIA

Fellow Ministers,
Assistant Ministers present,
Permanent/Principal/Under Secretaries,
Senior Officials,
The EAC Secretariat,
Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great honour to be part of this Ministerial Session of the 5th EAC Sectoral Council on Gender, Youth, Children, Social Protection and Community Development.

I am delighted to join you my counterparts in charting the way forward for this very important meeting of the Sectoral Council. Let me take this early opportunity to welcome you to this meeting.

Allow on behalf of the Partner States, to thank the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, for the warm reception accorded to the Partner States' delegations upon arrival in this country, and for hosting this meeting. I also thank the EAC Secretariat for organizing the meeting.

Colleagues, we all appreciate that we are holding this meeting amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which is threatening to claw back the achievements made in all the critical areas in the pertinent sub-sectors. I take cognizance that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the way we do business; our livelihoods, and our lives. I therefore urge that as a Community, we explore innovative ways of working to ensure we undertake the planned activities and deliver on our mandate.

I commend the Permanent/Principal/Under Secretaries, and the Senior Officials for the great effort they have put, in preparing a comprehensive report for our consideration.

Colleagues, we have a huge task ahead of us as a Sectoral Council, which includes driving forward the agenda of the subsectors of Gender, Youth, Children, Social Protection and Community Development; and ensuring that it excels in the region.

I am aptly informed and going by the title of the sector; that this sector reaches a very large segment of the population within the region, and therefore, it behooves us to ensure that this segment of the population is brought on-board the EAC integration process.

I acknowledge with pride the processes that have been put in place at the EAC Secretariat, to ensure inclusivity of all the stakeholders by developing sector specific policies, despite the financial and human resource constraints and other inherent challenges faced by this sector. In the same vein, I call upon the EAC Partners to support this endeavor by implementing the policies developed so far in this sector.

Honourable Ministers

The Republic of Kenya is committed to ensuring that the EAC directives and decisions for this sector are implemented; and because courtesy begins at home, allow me to highlight some key milestones that we have achieved since the last Sectoral Council held in Kampala, Uganda in May 2018:

(1) Gender

- a) Development of the National Policy on Gender and Development, 2019;
- b) Development of the National Policy on Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation, 2019;
- c) Development of the 2nd generation Kenya National Action Plan on United Nation Resolution 1325 on Peace and Security;

- d) Co-leading the Generation Equality Forum on Gender Based Violence and launch on 28th May 2021;

(2) Youth

- a) Review of the National Youth Policy 2009 to the Kenya Youth Development Policy, 2019
- b) Implementation of the Kenya youth Empowerment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP)
- c) Establishment and strengthening of the National Youth Council (Youth Voice)
- d) Restructuring of the National Youth Service (NYS) to a State Corporation
- e) operationalization of the Youth Empowerment Centres

(3) Children

- a) Implementation of the EAC Child Policy and participation in the development of key studies, reports and documents;
- b) To further improve the protective environment for children, we are in the process of reviewing the Children Act, 2001. The review process involved many stakeholders including children, state and non-state actors in the children sector.

The Children Bill has been approved by Cabinet and transmitted to the National Assembly for consideration. Notable provisions in the Bill include recognition of the central role of families in childcare and development; promotion of family-based care for children without parental care as opposed to institutional care; enhancement of the age of criminal responsibility from 8 years to 12 years; among others.

- c) The country is also guided by the National Children Policy, the National Plan of Action for Children and various standards and guidelines for child protection.
- d) In 2019/2020, we undertook the second National Violence Against Children study and developed a National Prevention and Response Plan which is under implementation to ensure children are protected from neglect, abuse, violence and exploitation.

(4) Persons with Disability

- a) Implementation of the EAC Policy for Persons with Disabilities by aligning the national policy to the provisions of the EAC policy;
- b) Review of the Persons with Disabilities Act

(5) Community Development

- a) development of the National Policy on Community Development that has been submitted to Cabinet for adoption
- b) Development of Community Groups Registration Bill 2021 to provide a regulatory framework for the registration and management of groups;
- c) Other programmes being implemented include; Volunteerism and community mobilization for socio-economic empowerment.

(6) Older Persons

- a) development of the National Policy on Older Persons and Ageing and we are in the process of finalizing the Action Plan to implement the policy provisions;
- b) Establishment of a Model Rescue Centre for neglected and abandoned older persons as a benchmark for other institutions and development

of National Standards and Guidelines on the Establishment and Management of Institutions for Older Persons

- c) The Country is also in the process of ratifying the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa that urges State Parties to adopt legislative measures that recognize the rights and freedoms of Older Persons enshrined in the Protocol.

(7) Social Protection

- a) there is a National Policy on Social Protection; and the following programmes/interventions are also in place;
- b) A government- funded National Safety Net Programme with about 1.2 million beneficiaries: the programme has four components –The Older Persons Cash Transfer (OPTC), the Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC), the Cash Transfer for Persons with Severe Disabilities and the Hunger Safety Net.
- c) The government is in the process of ensuring health protection for all beneficiaries, under the Universal Health Care (UHC) agenda;
- d) Moving towards more inclusive schemes and is currently pursuing to introduce a Universal Child Benefit;
- e) in the process of establishing the Social Assistance Fund
- f) Working to establish a more integrated approach to social protection programming under the complementarity initiative or the 'Cash Plus' agenda for sustainability. This has seen the introduction of programs such as the Nutrition Improvement through Cash and Health Education (NICHE) and the Economic Inclusion initiatives.

Honourable Ministers,

Allow me to reiterate Kenya's commitment in driving forward the EAC integration process and assure you that we will work together to ensure the implementation of the decisions of the Summit; The Council; and this Sectoral Council.

I wish you fruitful discussions.

THANK YOU