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SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICY REVIEW COMMENCED

The Department of Social Welfare (DSW) of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) organised a meeting to review the social protection policy of the country in Accra. This meeting which marked the commencement of the review process drew social protection experts from academia, civil society and other institutions. The review process is aimed at coming up with interventions that would help improve on the country's social welfare system.

Key among the issues discussed was the need to come up with appropriate social services that would respond to the current emerging social issues such as poverty, widening social inequality gaps, migration and working parents, among others. The key note speaker Hon. Mrs. Nana Oye Lithur, Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection mentioned that due to the current growing population, with its attendant social problems, there is the need for a more responsive social welfare system for the country. Hence the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) will soon be changed to Department of Social Protection (DSP) to reflect current trends.

She acknowledged that presently the DSW is operating under challenging circumstances but promised that with the transformation that was about to take place in the next few years, the department would be well resourced to handle its mandate. She said the skills of staff would be enhanced, particularly at the district levels, and that other human resource needs of the department would be addressed.

Other speakers spoke on the need for government to take social development seriously. The need for effective partnership and collaboration between communities and social workers to stem the problem of social vices and more importantly the call on government to adequately resource the Ministry to carry out its mandate.

The African Development Programme applauds the initiative of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to review the Social Protection Policy of the Country. Social Policy has come to stay and with the emerging trends in our globalized system there is the need as a country to adapt to changing situations. Thus, ADP welcomes

the move to rename the Department of Social Welfare as Department of Social Protection. This we believe would help expand the mandate of the DSW or DSP to effectively and efficiently attend to emerging global trends. However, notably key challenges of the current DSW should be addressed. Currently the DSW have been decentralized. Every MMDA has the DSW incorporated making the department cover almost every corner of this country. However the logistics and funds to operate effectively has always been a challenge.

The African Development would like to add its voice by asking that Government takes a critical look at social protection in this country and channel resources there. Poverty can be eradicated, development would take place if we care for the needs of less deprived and the underprivileged by bridging the gap between the rich and poor with these new social protection mechanisms.

A rejoinder from the Daily Graphic

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Development Programme](http://www.facebook.com/AfricanDevelopmentProgramme)

The African Development Programme is an NGO that has been in existence since 1993. In collaboration with national and international partners, it has been actively engaged in Social Protection Issues with core specialization in Education, Health, Social Development, Vulnerable and Excluded Group and the Physically Challenged in Society. Governance and Gender Issues are cross-cutting programme areas.

MDG ON EDUCATION WAS NOT AMBITIOUS ENOUGH

The Head of Programs at African Development Programme, Mr. Charles Othniel Abbey, has stated that the Millennium Development Goal 2 on achieving universal primary education was not ambitious enough for developing countries.

Mr. Abbey said this in a 2-hour radio discussion with a private radio station, Pink FM (96.9), in Ghana on 4th November 2014. The discussion was the 2nd in the series of a joint-MDG Public Discourse campaign between the radio station and African Development Programme aimed at sharing knowledge and generating discussions for improved policy-making, national development strategies formulation and achieving holistic development.

According to him, the Education for All (EFA) goals should have been the rallying point for the global community instead of the target of universal primary education. This was because primary education was limited in scope unlike basic education. Mr. Abbey gave the distinction that whilst primary education basically covered 6 years of schooling (i.e. grade 1 – 6), basic education encompassed early childhood, primary and junior secondary levels. He alluded to the fact that for sub-Sahara Africa and developing countries who had high rates of illiteracy and booming youthful population, targeting primary education has been inimical to efforts at skills acquisition, literacy and talent development of young people. Hence, he called on African leaders to lift the standard higher post-2015 by targeting secondary education as a policy measure towards curbing high illiteracy, lack of employable skills and rising tension.

Mr. Abbey highlighted that whilst the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/2014 predicts that the global goals on education would not be attained, there was the need for political commitment on the part of African governments in financing education. He said that advocating for 20% allocation of national budgets to education was not only a fiscal decision but a political decision as well. Thus, concrete steps at addressing issues of girl-child access, teacher motivation, and provision of teaching and learning materials should be taken seriously. Mr. Abbey cautioned that in the face of fiscal challenges such as in Ghana, cutting back on educational spending such as scrapping of teacher trainee allowances among others may likely reverse the gains made in gross enrolment rates, gender parity and retention of pupils.

