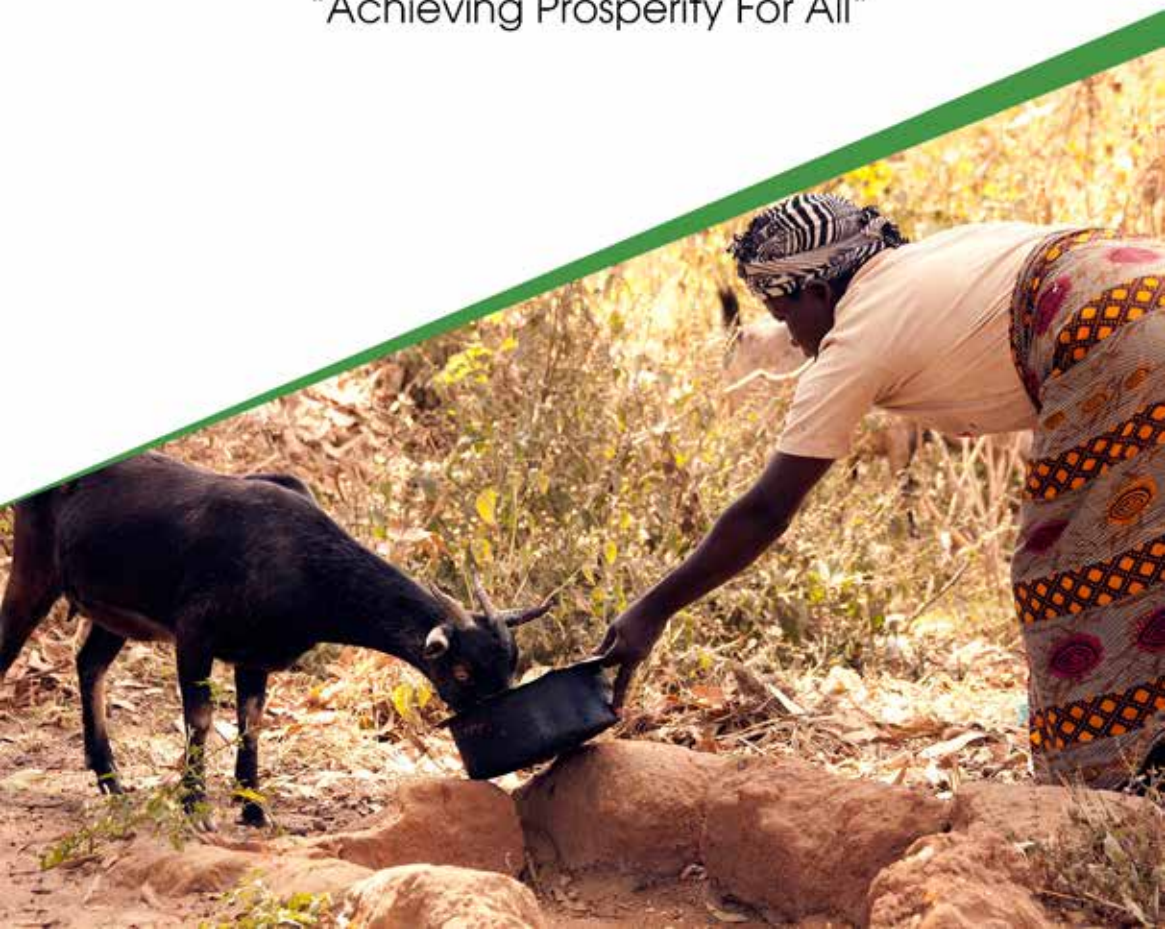




Background and Detailed Synopsis of Proposed Sessions

“Achieving Prosperity For All”



The Social Protection momentum in Zambia

A just society is one that provides social support to the most vulnerable and protects income throughout the life cycle. With this realization, the Government of the Republic of Zambia has in recent years increasingly strengthened its social protection response to tackle the stubbornly high levels of poverty and vulnerability in the country.

The Policy and Regulatory Framework

In 2014 government approved the National Social Protection Policy and in March 2016 the National Aging and the National Disability Policies were launched. Government is also in the process of developing a Social Protection sector coordination mechanism and M&E framework. Government is also in the process of developing comprehensive legislation to operationalize National Social Protection Policy.

It is expected that the strengthened regulatory and policy framework will help guarantee the delivery of coherent, coordinated and scaled-up social protection interventions. The new regulatory and policy framework for the sector is also expected to improve coordination across contributory social protection instruments and between contributory and non-contributory social security schemes.

Scale up of Social Protection Interventions

In addition to strengthening the policy and regulatory framework, Government has also been rapidly scaling up its Social Cash Transfer programme since 2014. This programme now reaches 185,000 households. The target for 2016 is to reach 243,000 households in 78 districts.

The cash transfer programme has been accompanied by a rigorous impact evaluation since 2010. The findings of intermediate survey rounds have revealed significant impacts on poverty, food security, child well-being, productive and economic activity, as well as on the local economy. The results also point towards opportunities to link cash transfers to other social protection interventions or basic social services.

Similarly the Government is making significant efforts towards scaling up other flagship “basic social protection” interventions, such as the Home Grown School Feeding programme, Youth Empowerment Fund and strengthening the existing women empowerment programme, through the introduction of the GEWEL and ADVANCE programmes among others under various line ministries in social protection sector.

From the social security perspective, Government has embarked on social security reforms. The reforms are meant to address the challenges faced by social security schemes, leading to delayed payment of benefits, inadequate and outdated legislation among others. These reforms comprise the introduction of a new social health insurance scheme and the extension of coverage of social insurance to workers in the informal economy.

Sector Challenges

Despite remarkable progress in the sector, significant challenges remain, in particular in regards to the creation of the necessary institutional capacity and financial space to establish governments system to deliver social protection throughout the life cycle.

Sessions Details 16 - 20 May 2016

1. *Session: Commemoration of the International Day of the Family*

Synopsis: The International Day of the Family is observed on the 15th of May every year. The Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993 with resolution A/RES/47/237 and reflects the importance the international community attaches to families.

The International Day provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting families.

The commemoration of the 2016 International day of the family will take place as part of the key events of the 2016 Social Protection week and will be celebrated in Chongwe district and will be officiated by the First Lady.

The event will include keynote speeches by various stakeholders', performances from various artists and interactions with vulnerable families that will receive some donations.

2. *Session: Building a Social Protection System for Zambia: key priorities and challenges moving forward.*

Synopsis: Since the launch of the National Social Protection Policy in 2014 Zambia has embarked on the ambitious journey of developing an inclusive and efficient social protection systems to protect and promote decent standards of living for all Zambians throughout their life.

Social Protection has become a key priority in the national and international development agenda, calling for the coordination and engagement of multiple line ministries and agencies within government and the active participation of civil society, cooperating partners and the academia.

This session will provide an overview of the main achievements and outstanding challenges with the establishment of a modern and comprehensive social protection system in Zambia.

It will be an opportunity to critically discuss the key elements of the policy and regulatory framework - including the recent development of a Social Protection Bill, the state of expenditure in the sector and programme implementation, with a view at identifying key priorities and challenges moving forward.

3. *Session: Students Atelier*

Synopsis: Delivery of social protection programmes relies in part on the level of engagement of various stakeholders.

It is understood that students are equally essential as they engage in studies and constitute the potential human resource towards delivery of services under social protection.

Therefore, this session will provide students with an opportunity for discussions on relational aspects of social protection, Impact Evaluations of Social Cash Transfers, and the Vision of Social Protection System in Zambia.

4. Session: Health Protection – How to make the new Social Health Insurance scheme work for all

Synopsis: In recognition of the need to move towards Universal Health Coverage and develop a sound and sustainable health care financing strategy, the Government of the Republic of Zambia is planning to introduce a mandatory Social Health Insurance (SHI) scheme for all citizens.

Based on the principles of equity, solidarity, fair-financing, efficiency and universality, the SHI scheme aims at:

- (i) Providing improved access to quality health services to all citizens of Zambia on a timely manner and without financial hardship.
- (ii) Mobilizing equitable and sustainable financial resources for improving health systems performance.
- (iii) Contributing to reducing inequities, sustain social cohesion and build a healthy workforce, thus leading to improved economic growth.

The objective of this session is to inform and engage stakeholders on the proposed principles, design and strategies of the scheme, with a focus on the key features to ensure equity in access and universal coverage.

5. Session: Launch of the Social Cash Transfer Programme Evaluation

Synopsis: The Social Cash Transfer Programme is one of the Zambian Government flagship Social Protection programmes. It provides regular cash transfers to poor and vulnerable households with a view at reducing poverty and food security, improving access to social services such as health and education and fostering economic autonomy.

The SCT programme currently reaches 185,000 beneficiary households in 50 districts. Since its early stages the programme has been subject of a rigorous impact evaluation that combined qualitative and quantitative methods to gather evidence on the impact and effectiveness of the programme on individual and household welfare, as well as on the development of communities and the local economy.

Led by a consortium of international and national institutions, the evaluation documented during a period of four years challenges and achievements of the SCT.

It is considered one of the most rich and informative evaluations of programmes of such kind in the region. The official Launch of the SCT evaluation results is an opportunity to disseminate the results of the SCT evaluation to the wider audience and discuss the future of the SCT in the Zambia social protection landscape.

6. Session: Technical meeting on the Social Cash Transfer Programme Evaluation

Synopsis: The SCT evaluation has covered a wide range of impact areas, including poverty, food security, health and education, agricultural production and economic activity, community cohesion and relationships, and the local economy.

It has also addressed delivery performance, notably in terms of regular and predictable delivery of transfers but also in relation to other implementation aspects such as targeting, the community welfare assistance committees, and the transfer size.

Both in the fields of programme impact and programme delivery, the evaluation findings lend themselves very well for a detailed discussion on the implications for programme design, implementation, and linkages with other services and programmes.

The national, provincial, and district officials of the Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare form a key audience to critically review, discuss and highlight these implications. This session aims to kick-start that discussion.

7. Session: Strengthening Coordination between Social Protection and Agriculture

Synopsis: With the large majority of the poor living in rural areas, the linkages between social protection and agriculture policy are essential to foster productive and sustainable inclusion of most disadvantaged households into the economy.

Social protection programmes such as cash transfers have the potential to increase poor households' capacity to engage in productive activities in agriculture, by promoting investment in agriculture and livestock inputs and assets.

The government also directs other types of support – such as the fertilized input subsidy programme – to increasing productivity of small scale farmers. Yet coordination and linkages between social protection and agricultural programmes are weak from a planning, budgeting and implementation perspective.

The session will provide an opportunity to discuss the need and possible avenues to increase coherence and realize stronger synergies between social protection and agriculture interventions.

8. Session: Mainstreaming disability into Social Protection

Synopsis: Worldwide there are more than one billion persons with disabilities with an estimated 80 per cent living in developing countries. According the preliminary findings of the Zambia national disability survey the disability prevalence rate in Zambia is at 7%.

The majority of the disabled are found among the poorest deciles of the population. The linkage between poverty, vulnerability and economic and social rights is well documented.

Increasingly, poverty is being tied to the lack of access to equal opportunities, inequitable distribution of resources, and the marginalization and disempowerment of certain groups.

Therefore failing to include specific group such as persons with disabilities in social protection programmes is not only problematic from a human protection rights point of view, but economically counterproductive. Therefore this session provides an opportunity to review how far disability has been mainstreamed in social protection and what else can be done to improve this.

9. *Session The Role of Civil Society and Social Partners in Building Zambia Social Protection System*

Synopsis: Civil Society and Social Partners are key actors in the development of a Social Protection system in Zambia as they can play a critical role in the design of programmes and interventions that respond to citizens' needs, in the implementation and facilitation of community based social protection schemes, and in ensuring government is kept accountable to delivering social protection services to citizens through monitoring and advocacy.

This session will provide civil society organizations and social partners and opportunity to discuss in a dedicated space main instances and concerns in regards to the ongoing developments in the Zambia social protection sector.

10. *Parallel Session: Social Protection Exhibition*

Synopsis: Open exhibition of key Social Protection programmes implemented by various organizations.

11. *Session: Extending Social Security to the Informal Economy: What have we learnt? Where do we go?*

Synopsis: Almost 90% of workers in Zambia are engaged in the informal economy and lack access to traditional social security mechanisms such as health insurance, pension, maternity or employment injury protection.

The fact that the vast majority of the labour force in Zambia unprotected from risks creates a burden to society and hampering increases in productivity. It is of paramount importance for Zambia that progress is made towards the extension of social security to workers in the informal economy as part of the decent work agenda.

Despite government commitment the road is paved with challenges as many counties in the world's struggle to make progress in this area.

This session will provide with an opportunity to discuss the findings from a series of recent studies and pilot experiences on the extension of social security to workers in the informal economy (construction and milling industry, agriculture sector and domestic workers) to engage participants in a discussion on innovative strategy to “crack the hard nut”.

12. Session: Exploring Synergies: HIV-Sensitive social protection

Synopsis: Poverty is known to be a driver of vulnerability to HIV infection. Increasing evidence is available about the positive impact of cash transfers on demand for HIV prevention and care services and on vulnerability indicators such as early marriage, teenage pregnancy, and school drop-outs.

Since 2015, the Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Health have been piloting, in four districts, an HIV+SCT learning initiative.

The intervention package focuses on capacity development of social welfare and health sector staff and community-based volunteers, strengthening of referral pathways, provision of enhanced HIV prevention and care services, and a series of demand creation and social and behavioural change communication activities - all with the aim of enhancing uptake of critical HIV prevention and care services.

The assumption is that the roll-out of the Social Cash Transfers in these districts provides an opportunity to reach families with adolescent boys and girls at a vulnerable age and to complement the impact of the transfer on household consumption. The initiative is currently being scaled up to an additional 11 districts.

13. Session: Exploring Synergies: Nutrition-Sensitive social protection

Synopsis: Malnutrition prevents millions of Zambia’s children from reaching their potential. The rates of malnutrition – among the highest in the world – are reducing the country’s chances of achieving its aspiration to be a prosperous upper-middle-income country by 2030.

Today, in 2016, more than 40% of Zambian children under five are stunted (low height-for-age) and 15% are underweight (low weight-for-age). International evidence shows that a nutrition-sensitive social protection programme can successfully contribute to the reduction of malnutrition.

The scale-up of the SCT presents a unique opportunity to use social protection as a platform to improve chronic malnutrition (stunting) in Zambia even though the SCT impact evaluation highlights that cash alone is not enough. In what ways can the design of the cash transfer programme become more nutrition-sensitive?

In what ways can existing nutrition services and interventions, such as those under the ‘First 1,000 Days’ programme be better articulated to social protection services, including social cash transfers?



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