



**SPEECH BY HON. AMB. UKUR YATANI, CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION, DURING THE OFFICIAL  
OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHILD  
PROTECTION AT DAYSTAR UNIVERSITY, NAIROBI, ON 8<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST,  
2018**

**Ministry Officials,  
Development Partners,  
Prof. James Kombo, Vice Chancellor Daystar university,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Children Present,  
Members of The Fourth Estate,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me great pleasure to share these important moments in the history of the children sector in which academicians, practitioners and all other

stakeholders have gathered to deliberate on the salient issues pertaining to child protection.

This conference has come at an opportune time when failure to provide adequate protection to children is emerging as a global crisis.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

It has been documented that an astronomical 0.5-1.5 billion children are experiencing violence annually, 150 million girls and 73 million boys are raped or subjected to sexual violence (WHO) in addition to having 115 million children, according to ILO, engaged in extremely harmful forms of work. This

violation of children's rights, **ladies and gentlemen**, cannot continue to be tolerated. Still it is a saddening affair that children continue to die each year due to abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Continued discrimination, stigma and degraded life chances faced by vulnerable children and consequent maltreatment leads to failure in guaranteeing that they fully contributed to economic development to their full potential despite their resilience. It is in this regard that this conference has come at a time when we, as a nation and individuals, must rise above narrow confines of personal interests to safeguard our future through promising child protection practices that guarantee children a life free from violence,

protection from adverse circumstances of conflicts, or disaster and be able to have them placed in thriving family environment.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am aware that this conference theme: **From vulnerability to resilience innovation and evidence**, bears inevitable truth to the current global grim reality of the circumstances of children. The theme thus envisions the process of moving from vulnerability to resilience, envisions interventions that building resilience in a variety of contexts including policy, program and project design

as well as monitoring and evaluation. Resilience building exploits combination of the strengths, attributes, skills and resources available to community, society, and organizations for improved adaptive capacity thereby exposing beneficial child protection opportunities.

Further the segment on innovative approach to child protection includes but not limited to mapping all available innovative technologies, identifying the key gaps in child protection programs, looking at the evidence supporting how technology can improves outcomes, linking practices, working models and research to technologies for improved outcomes in child protection. It

supports identifying and actually getting the appropriate technology integrated into child protection programs.

The third component on evidence-based practice principle as a key concept in case management methodology, involves processes used by practitioners and researchers to guide and inform delivery of services integrating the following components in documenting child protection: Current client needs, situation and environment; best available research evidence; client values and preferences ; and practitioner's judgment and expertise.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Despite the theme and against the backdrop of sad global outlook there is reason that countries need to respond urgently to and mitigate the current complex circumstances that not only include climate change, unmitigated conflict-induced migration and uncontrolled urbanization that expose children to vulnerability. In responding to some of these issues the Government of Kenya put in place various measures geared towards mitigating vulnerability in the sector.

Through the Inua Jamii Cash Transfer Program, the Government has been supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children to cushion them from the effects



of poverty and HIV pandemic. Currently, a total of 353,000 Households are registered and are being supported under this program.

Further, The Government through the Department of Children Services is supporting a total of 22,103 Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC's) in boarding secondary schools by paying for them school fees of Ksh 30,000 per year each. This is under the Presidential Secondary School Bursary Program in which the Government allocates a total of Ksh 400 Million per year.

In order to strengthen her delivery of services, the Government through the Department of Children Services also runs a Volunteer Children Officer (VCO) program in which willing applicants are recruited and trained as Volunteer

Children Officers to complement the work of the Children Officers both in the Sub County Offices and Statutory Institutions. Currently the Department has recruited a total of 400 VCOS countrywide, a strengthened workforce will translate to safety of our children.

In order to ensure children issues remain in focus, the Government has been at the forefront in advocating for child participation which is one of the key pillars in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child for which Kenya is a Signatory. To this end the Kenya Children Assembly structures both at the County and Sub County Offices were put in place. This aims at promoting child participation by allowing them to be part of the decisions that

affect their welfare. Through the KCA forums, the children have been enlightened on their rights and responsibilities.

In addition, the Government has developed various guidelines; child online protection for children, parents, caregivers and educators; Guidelines for Alternative Family Care for Children; Area Advisory Councils (AAC) guidelines, in line with the Constitution among others.

It is important to note that the Government in collaboration with partners conducted a study on violence against children (VAC) in 2010 and developed a response plan, some efforts have been made to implement the plan though implementation process need to be strengthened and given more focus. Due

to new emerging issues of violence against children like radicalization, child online abuse, child trafficking and the Department has found it necessary to conduct another study before the end of the year 2018 on the best way to protect children.

As I conclude, I wish to commend most sincerely the partners who have worked tirelessly, contributed immensely, despite the economic difficulties, to make this conference take off. I particularly wish to recognize the role played by UNICEF, Plan International, Child Fund and other donors who contributed both financially and materially besides the university in whose premises the conference has taken place.

Lastly, but most importantly, I wish all the participants fruitful deliberations and remain faithful that the resulting resolution will create a promising future to the children of this Country and the World at large.

Thank you and God bless you.