



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF POVERTY ERADICATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE

DIRECTORATE OF POLICY AND STRATEGIES

**Opening Remarks by Honourable Bishop (Emeritus) Dr. Zephania Kameeta
Minister of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare
for SPP- Experts meeting**

**hosted at the
Protea Hotel Furstenhof**

05 September 2019

**Honourable Deputy Minister of Poverty Eradication
and Social Welfare: Honourable Reverend Aino
Kapewangolo**

**Executive Director of the Ministry of Poverty
Eradication and Social Welfare: Ms. Esther Lusepani**

**Special Advisor to the Minister of Poverty Eradication
and Social Welfare: Ms. Ivonne Kaukuetu**

FES – Resident Director Dr. Rudolf Traub-Merz,

The Moderator: Mr. John Nakuta,

Invited Social Protection Experts

Dear distinguished participants,

Members of the media,

All protocol observed,

A very Good Morning and welcome.

The Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare welcomes your participation in this **Consultative Meeting on the draft Social Protection Policy of Namibia.**

I would like to extend my gratitude to you distinguished experts for availing yourself to be present at this very important meeting that aims to critically analyse the policy document as well as to provide valid inputs.

The Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare is coordinating the formulation of the draft Social Protection Policy that aims to create a social protection system that is efficient and effective in addressing risks and vulnerabilities to shocks, across the life cycle of Namibian citizens.

To date, the Ministry has completed Regional consultations on the draft policy document on Social Protection. Following to these consultations, we have invited you, Social Protection Experts to analyse this draft policy document **before we host a validation workshop and thereafter submit to Cabinet for approval.**

Social Protection is an important global policy agenda.

This fact is to be welcomed, because the lack of access to social protection is a major obstacle to economic and social development and its devastating effects on human welfare, and as you may know that Social Protection is associated with health-relevant targets of five Sustainable Development Goals. Also, Social Protection addresses vulnerability, tackles social exclusion through managing related risks and aims to eradicate poverty.

Dear experts; Namibia has extensive Social Protection programmes that have an impact on reducing poverty as demonstrated in income and consumption surveys.

Nevertheless, existing Social Protection programmes are identified to have numerous challenges including; fragmentation and inadequate coordination, which hampers effective implementation of Social Protection interventions. There is also a lack of an integrated social registry, funding and human resource constraints and inadequate coverage and adequacy of Social Protection.

In 2018, the Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare supported by our very generous development partner UNICEF, conducted a desk review on the Social Protection system in Namibia.

We have established a Core Team which brings together various Offices, Ministries and Agencies of the Government of the Republic of Namibia and other players in the Social Protection arena to coordinate the drafting of this policy. The Core Team reviewed the first draft, made suggestions for improvement which were incorporated into a second draft. The second draft was presented to National Planning Commission (NPC) to review and determine its conformity with 'Guidelines for the Structure of a Public Policy Document'. Furthermore, the draft has been presented to management teams of the different Offices, Ministries and Agencies for inputs.

Through a desk review and inputs received from various players in the Social Protection field through intensive consultations informed the drafting of the Social

Protection Policy, and thus, various implementation challenges on the existing Social Protection Programmes and risks areas where identified.

The Social Protection Policy is very ambitious in that we want strengthen existing Social Protection Programs such as the Child grants and Maternity Grants by making them Universal and adequate. There are also new proposals to fill in existing gaps such as the Basic Income Grant that will cover the unemployed between the ages of 30-59 years of age. The Universal Maternity Grant that is meant to cover the unemployed, self-employed and vulnerable women that are pregnant and lactating.

The challenge that we are facing is that the new policy is bound to double the public spending on Social Welfare services from the current 5 Billion to 10 billion at a time that our fiscus is under pressure due to unfavorable economic conditions. This brings the issues of affordability and sustainability into focus as we debate the policy.

In these regard, **it is anticipated that views of Social Protection experts are needed to analyze the draft policy** and provide us with valid inputs to enable us to produce a very good quality document that will ensure the whole Namibian population enjoys access to comprehensive social safety nets.

With your contributions, **we thank the participants, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung or FES and lastly UNICEF** for continually supporting the quest for an adequate, efficient and relevant Social Protection Policy in Namibia.

I look forward to a stimulating discussion and to advance in developing a coherent and comprehensive policy document on Social Protection.

I Thank You.