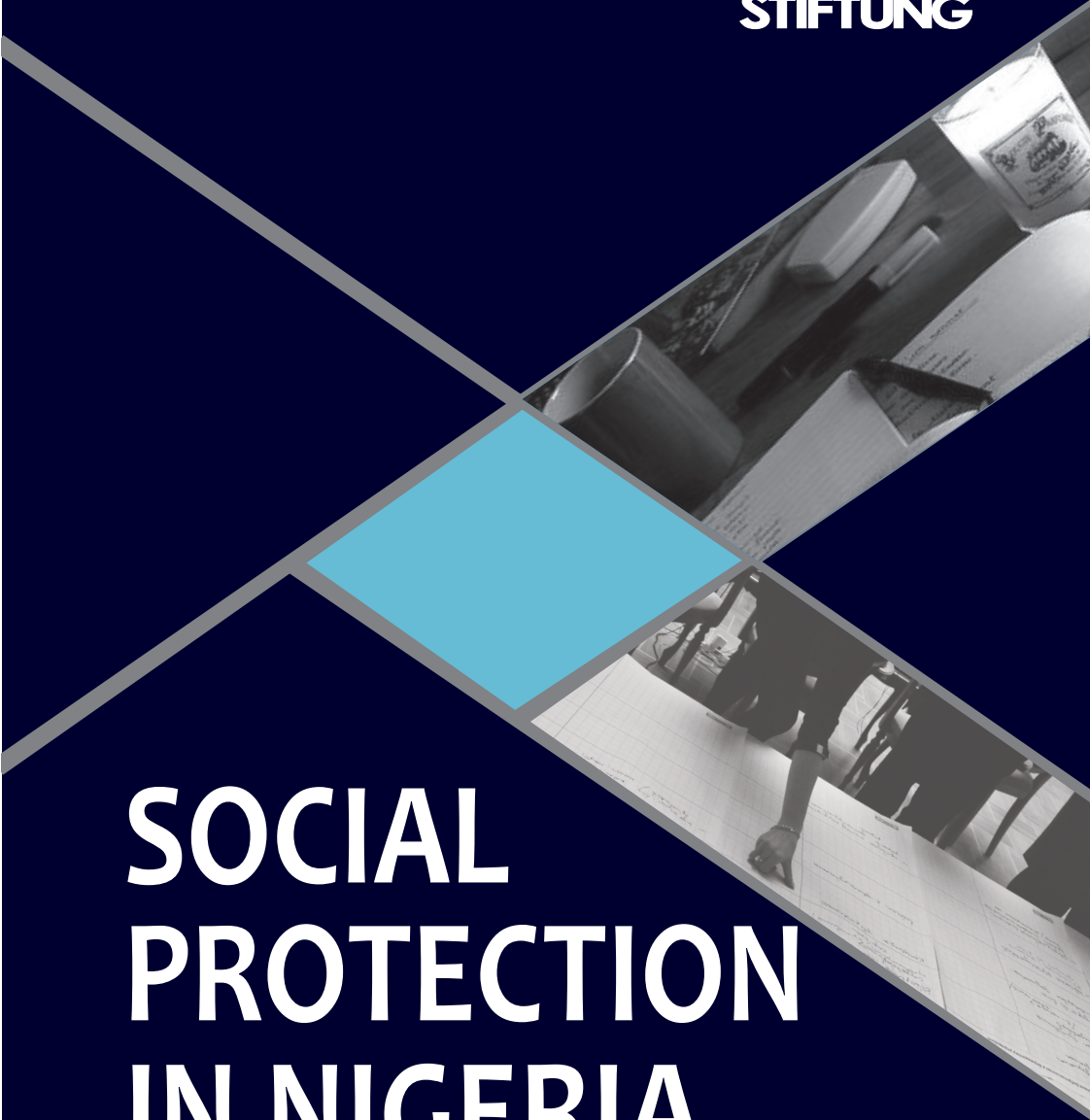




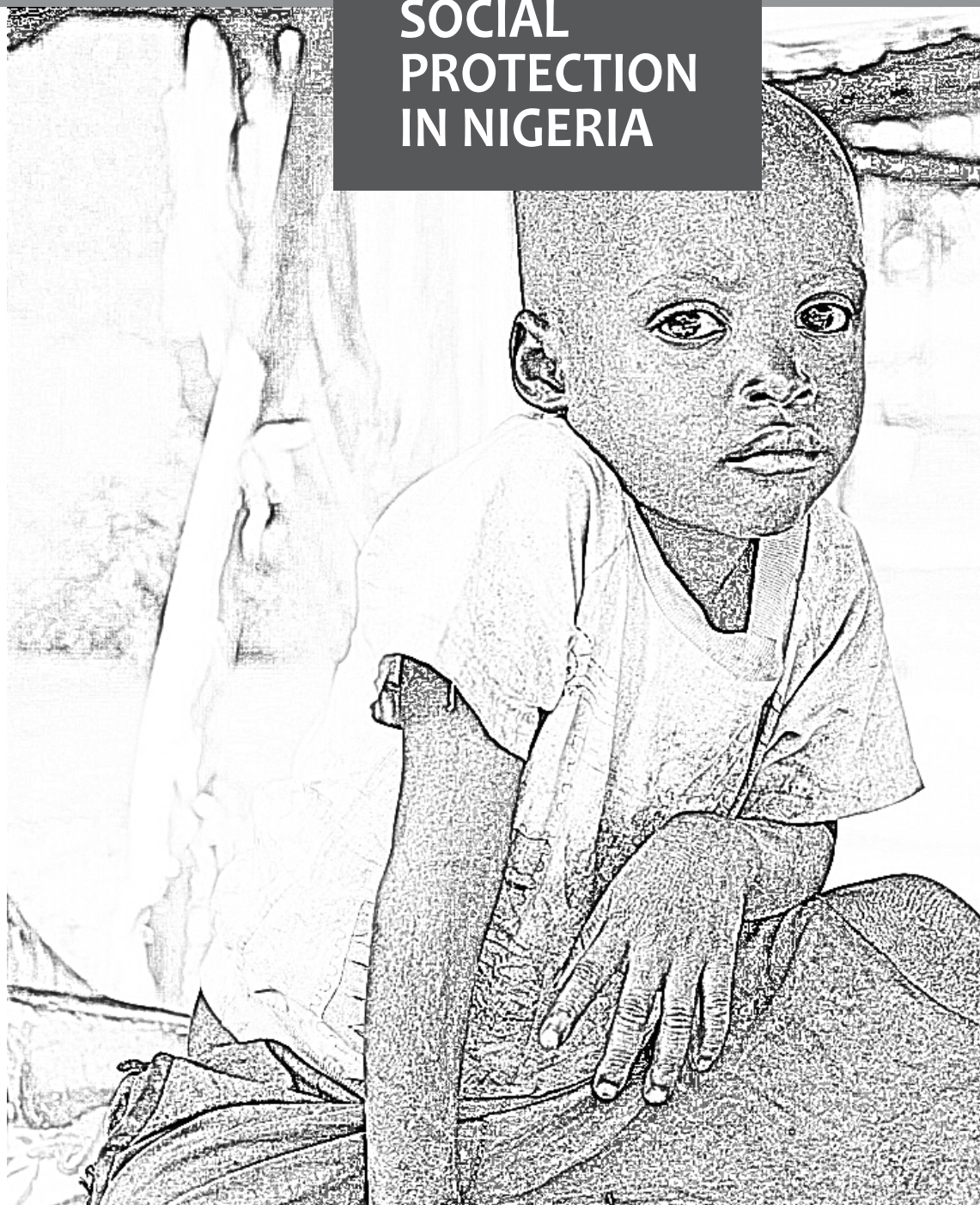
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# SOCIAL PROTECTION IN NIGERIA



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First Published 2018

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**ISBN: 978-978-56481-7-1**

Printed by Frankade@08062367774

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## ABBREVIATION

AU	African Union
BIG	Basic Income Guarantee
CBHIS	Community-based Health Insurance Scheme
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women
CGS	Community Grants Scheme
COPE	In Care of the People
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
DFID	UK Department for International Development
MCH	Maternal and Child Health Care
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NAPEP	National Programme for Poverty Eradication
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSITF	National Social Insurance Trust Fund
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PRAI	Poverty Reduction Accelerator Investment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STEM	Free Education Scheme for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
UCT	Unconditional Cash Transfer
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VVF	Vesicovaginal Fistula




## INTRODUCTION

Going by the 2018 figures of the World Bank, Nigeria has 86.9 million of her population living in extreme poverty – the largest globally (World Bank, 2018). This is in spite of various poverty related programmes implemented in the country since the 1980s. The area of social protection emerged to assist in addressing the poverty question, particularly in developing countries. This booklet is meant to provide on-hand information on social protection in Nigeria.

Information provided in this booklet were obtained mainly through desk-based research. The booklet provides explanation for social protection, particularly on how it relates to existing poverty reduction concepts. It also discusses the functions of social protection, ILO Recommendation 202 and three basic types of social protection namely: social insurance, social assistance and inclusion efforts. It highlights some impactful social protection programmes in Africa as a pointer to best practices.

The booklet undertakes a synopsis of some past poverty reduction programmes in Nigeria and indicates why they could not make the



expected impact on poverty reduction. It documents the policy elements of the 2017 social protection programme of the Federal Government – considered the most comprehensive, and makes recommendations towards its successful implementation.

### **What is Social Protection?**

Policy makers, academics and practitioners have often used social protection as the same thing with such terms as welfare, social security, safety nets or social insurance mechanism. While these terms might be part of the social protection, none of them standing alone can be said to mean social protection. Social protection can be viewed broadly as all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against destitution, and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised; with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social vulnerability of the poor and marginalised groups (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004).


## NIGERIA: OVERVIEW OF POVERTY PROFILE

The poverty situation in Nigeria, as reflected in the World Bank's 2017 Atlas of Sustainable Development Goals is a matter for concern. It shows that 35 million more Nigerians were living in extreme poverty in 2013 than in 1990. The Atlas tracks the progress being made by countries with regard to meeting the development goals set out by the United Nations, such as reducing economic inequality and illiteracy rates. Among the 10 most populous countries, for which data was available, only Nigeria recorded an increase in the number of citizens who live in extreme poverty (living on less than \$1.90 a day) over the period of the study (World Bank, 2017). About 50% of estimated 180 million (86.9 million) Nigerians live in extreme poverty with the number increasing by 6 persons every minute, according to World Poverty Clock 2018.

The poverty situation is also reflected in the high level of out of school children. Nigeria was estimated to have 10.5 million out of school children <https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/education.html> In October 2018, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) announced that the population of out-of-school children in Nigeria had increased from 10.5 million to 13.2 million and that the country was ranked as having the highest number of out-of-school children in the world.

<https://allafrica.com/stories/201810260021.html>





In terms of the human development, Nigeria was ranked 157th out of 189 countries sampled with a HDI value of 0.532 for 2017. (UNDP, 2018).


Social protection is, therefore, concerned with preventing, managing, and overcoming situations that adversely affect people's wellbeing. It consists of policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability. Such policies promote efficient labour markets and reduce people's exposure to shocks. They enhance people's capacity to manage economic and social risks, including unemployment, exclusion, sickness, disability, maternal and child care, old age challenges and emergencies such as flood and violent conflicts. Such interventions may be carried out by the state, non-governmental actors, the private sector, or through informal individual or community initiatives.

It is from this viewpoint that the Social Protection Policy document of the Federal Government of Nigeria defined social protection as:

*A mix of policies and programmes designed for individuals and households throughout the life cycle to prevent and reduce poverty and socio-economic shocks by promoting and enhancing livelihoods and a life of dignity.*

### **Global Policy Framework for Social Protection**


The policy framework for social protection reflects a noticeable pattern for concern around three main approaches: affirming social



security as an individual right of a human being; defining the social responsibility of the state in social security provisions; and placing social security among the guiding principles of state policy. These have been associated with a drive towards making social security a constitutional right. This development translated to the idea of a world economy underpinned by a global social protection floor constructed from the national floors embodied in the ILO R202. This instrument opened up a new idea of social justice from a global viewpoint- broadening the moral, legal and fiscal space for social protection in the transition to a more sustainable global economy.

The foregoing underscores the inclusion of social security issues in the Atlantic Charter of 1941, the Declaration of Philadelphia of 1944, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966. In 2001, the International Labour Conference recognised the effectiveness of this combination for growth and development of modern societies and therefore, concluded that social security is an indispensable part of government policy to ensure social cohesion and social peace and prevention of poverty (ILO, 2016). These events paved way for the emergence of social protection.

The position of social protection has been further promoted by some more recent regional instruments and initiatives, including the African Union's Social Policy Framework (2008), Strategy for Africa, the African Civil Society Platform for Social Protection, the African Union Vision 2063 and the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (CAP) (African Union, 2014).




The global and national consultations on this agenda supported by the UN system in several countries in Africa, called for protecting and promoting the right to social protection (FES, 2016).

### **Highlights of the ILO Recommendation 202**

One of the ILO instruments aimed at engaging with social security issues is the Social Protection Floor Recommendation No. 202, 2012. Recommendation 202, 2012 (R202) provides guidance to Members of the ILO towards ensuring nationally defined sets of basic social security guarantees (ILO, 2012), and hence to:

- (a) establish and maintain, as applicable, social protection floors as a fundamental element of their national social security systems; and
- (b) implement social protection floors within strategies for the extension of social security that progressively ensure higher levels of social security to as many people as possible, guided by ILO social security standards.

The R202 defines social protection floors as nationally defined sets of basic social security guarantees which secure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. That is, national governments are expected to set minimum standards for the attainment of basic socio-economic needs for workers and citizens at large. In carrying out the primary responsibility, the state is expected to apply the principle of universal protection, non-discrimination, gender equality and



responsiveness to special needs; social inclusion, including of persons in the informal economy; transparent, accountable and sound financial management and administration; full respect for collective bargaining and freedom of association for all workers; and tripartite participation with representative organisations of employers and workers. This is aimed at ensuring that over the life cycle (from conception to old age), everyone in need has access to essential health care and to basic income security which together secure effective access to goods and services defined as necessary at the national level. The levels of basic social security guarantees, according to R202, should be regularly reviewed through a transparent procedure established by national laws, regulations or practice. In designing and implementing national social protection floors, it is recommended that members should combine preventive, promotional and active measures, benefits and social services and promote productive economic activity and formal employment.

Members should also ensure coordination with other policies that enhance formal employment, income generation, education, literacy, vocational training, skills and employability, that promote secure work, entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprises within a decent work framework.

Section 12 of the R202 states that National Social Protection Floors should be financed by national resources, while Members whose economic and fiscal capacities are insufficient to implement the guarantees may seek international cooperation and support that may complement their own efforts.



## **National Strategies for the Extension of Social Security**

ILO R202 sub section 13(1) states that Members should among others: raise awareness about their social protection floors and undertake information programmes, including social dialogue:

1. ensure that social security extension strategies apply to persons both in the formal and informal economy and support the growth of formal employment and the reduction of informality;
2. ensure support for disadvantaged groups and people with special needs;
3. regularly convene national consultations to assess progress and discuss policies for the further horizontal and vertical extension of social security;
4. regularly collect, compile, analyse and publish social security data, statistics and indicators, that reflect among others, gender.




## SOCIAL PROTECTION: RELATED CONCEPTS

**Social security** is an aspect of social protection that relates with compulsory social insurance schemes financed by contributions from workers in the formal sector including civil servants. Hence, social security in this strict sense does not include informal sector workers such as agricultural workers and the self-employed.

For several decades, the ILO has been promoting social security agenda through the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102). Recommendation 202, however, takes the subject beyond social security – to embrace non-formal working people

This is important in the African context, where the relevance of social security is restricted by the fact that it covers only between 2 to 10 percent of the population, specifically those who are in formal employment.

The term **safety nets** is also an aspect of social protection. It refers essentially to non-contributory cash transfer programmes that basically target the poor or vulnerable. This, in other words, relates to persons who are living in poverty and are unable to meet their own basic needs or who are in danger of falling into poverty




because of adverse socioeconomic circumstances such as old age or illness. Safety nets aim to increase the consumption of basic commodities and essential services, either directly or indirectly through substitution effects. Social protection, on the other hand, refers to both contributory and non-contributory programmes. Safety nets are targeted at the poor and vulnerable (Monchuk, 2014).

**Social protection** is broader than social security and safety nets basically because social protection embraces persons in the formal and informal sectors as well as those who are unable to work due to certain incapacity such as old age or injury. It includes the poor, the unemployed - those at risk of poverty. It is observed that several benefits which workers in the formal sector enjoy such as pension, life and disability insurance, health care or maternity leave, which are often associated with social security policies, are based on workers' right approach, while social protection programmes are driven by human rights approach with a universal view, hence, not restricted to those that are in formal employment.


**Functions of Social Protection:**

The following functions of social protection (World Bank 2012, UNDP 2016, ILO 2017) are noteworthy.

1. Social protection contributes to human dignity, equity and social justice.
2. It is equally important for political inclusion, empowerment and the more stable development of democratic institutions under the rule of law.

- 
3. It functions to cushion the impact of economic crisis among vulnerable populations. It serves as a macroeconomic stabiliser by increasing demand, creating multiplier effects and by enabling people to better overcome poverty and social exclusion -paying particular attention to vulnerable groups - protecting and empowering people across the life cycle.
  4. It provides basic income security through social transfers such as pensions for the elderly and persons with disabilities, child benefits, income support benefits and/or employment guarantees and services for the unemployed and working poor.
  5. It provides universal access to essential affordable social services in health, water and sanitation, education, food security, housing among others. Social protection benefits improve access to labour markets and direct benefits to those who otherwise would be excluded from only paid worker-based measures.
  6. Social protection and labour policies contribute to sustainable, inclusive growth.
  7. Social protection programmes have proven an important aspect of developing countries' efforts to fight poverty and hunger. Hence, social protection has the potential to contribute significantly to long-term sustainable development.




- 
8. Social protection also contributes significantly to economic growth in two main ways. First, by improving access to health care, education and income, it tends to unlock the full productive potential of a country, increase labour market participation and entrepreneurial activity. Second, it acts as a stabiliser in times of economic crisis by helping to maintain a minimum level of purchasing power and therefore, prevents demand from dropping sharply. It helps to maintain household consumption such that people are enabled to overcome the risk of poverty and social exclusion.
  9. Social protection also risk behaviours related to HIV, teen pregnancy, crime, among others – thereby sustaining human capital.
  10. Social protection has been identified as having the potential to support environmental sustainability by strengthening the capacity against natural disasters.

### **Types of Social Protection**

Three major types of social protection are identifiable as follows:


- 1) **Social Insurance** aims at assisting people to deal with issues of vulnerabilities linked to old age, such as loss of income due to retirement, illness or disability. Examples are the Contributory Pensions Scheme (CPS), the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) – based on insurance principles.

- 
- 2) **Social Assistance** refers mainly to non-contributory programmes, such as child support grants, school feeding programmes, public works programmes including cash-for-work or food-for-work, cash transfers, emergency reliefs and non-contributory pensions for the elderly. It mainly targets the poor and most vulnerable groups. The home-grown school feeding programme of the Federal Government, old age grants in some states of the Federation are examples of social assistance. The underlying reasoning is that discrimination or implementation of policies that lack inclusion can lead to the poverty of its victims.
  
  - 3) **Labour Market Programmes** reflect the regulation of the labour market - working hours and wages such as the National Minimum Wage Act, safety in the workplace exemplified by the Employee Compensation Act, 2010 and anti-discrimination laws such as HIV and AIDS (Anti-discrimination Act), public works programmes, skill training, micro-financing among others.

## RIGHTS BASED SOCIAL PROTECTION

Rights based social protection views social protection as human right or citizens' right (ILO, 2017). The right to social protection was universally recognised as a fundamental human right guaranteeing a secure, healthy and decent standard of living necessary for the realisation of human aspirations. For instance, the body of standards produced by ILO over the years brought into existence the international social security legislation which gave the firm legal foundation for the human right approach to social security and also filled it with guaranteed minimum standards of protection.

The notion of social protection systems as an obligation of the state is well established under human rights law. It flows directly from the right to social security and a decent standard of living, which is recognised by articles 22 and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 9 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These can also be found in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, article 11; Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 26; the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, article 27; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, article 28.




When social protection is inserted into national constitution, it tends to guarantee it as a right. Most constitutions contain provisions that recognise the need for one or more forms of social protection such as social security, social insurance, social assistance and support, and social services. These are often provided for in the context of protection against specific social risks or life situations, such as motherhood, fatherhood, childhood or old age, and with respect to specific categories of the population, such as children and young persons, families with children, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

The constitution as a legal embodiment of human values attaches to social security rights a strong moral dimension – that of preventing the unjust denial of human dignity together with income. Constitutions define the way national legal systems work. When social protection is inserted into the constitution, it creates a duty for the state to implement it.

In the case of Nigeria, the whole of Chapter II of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 embodies the political, economic, social, cultural and developmental rights of Nigerian citizens. However, this chapter can rarely be enforced by virtue of section 6(6)(c) of the same constitution which aborts the rights.

This is unlike the Kenyan constitution in which Article 43 guarantees all Kenyans their economic, social and cultural rights, including rights to health, education, food, and decent livelihoods. The right to social security is explicitly stated, binding the state to adequately provide social security to such persons as are unable to



support themselves and their dependents (Devereux, 2012; Gavrilovic and Jones, 2012).


From the gender perspective, it has been observed that the ILO Recommendation No. 202 is neither gender inclusive nor gender specific. It does not address much of the structural inequalities that women are subjected to in a globalised economy. It moreover, erroneously, assumes that poor women should simply be treated like poor men, with a bit of financial help (UNRISD, 2012).

### **Nigeria as a Signatory on Social Protection**

Nigeria has ratified a number of key international social equity legislation instruments which form part of the social protection agenda, including the Civil and Political Rights Covenant, the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Covenant, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, not all states in the federation have passed these and the implementation is weak even for states where the law now exist. Moreover, there is limited, if any, conceptual link between the broader regulatory policies of equality and rights and social protection policies (FES, 2016).

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the State**


At the level of the Federal Government, the National Planning Commission is responsible for coordinating social protection. The Federal Government has the responsibility to mobilise and allocate resources to scale up social protection programmes in the country. She undertakes institutional roles and responsibilities and also



facilitates dialogue on the different types of interventions suitable in the Nigerian context and also promotes inter-sectoral and federal-state coordination. Given the devolved responsibility of social protection to the state level, the Federal Government has to be responsive to state needs, in spite of the flexibility of devolving some responsibility to the states

The Federal Government has the responsibility to support and generate political commitment for social protection at the federal and state levels. Broad-based commitment to social protection needs to be built at both the federal and the state level, given the important relationship between the two in terms of designing, funding and implementing programmes.

The Federal Government also has the responsibility of increasing investment in social service delivery because of the importance of this for the actualisation of social protection. Social sector expenditure remains low in Nigeria and delivery of services remains weak, in spite of its importance in the expansion and programming of social protection. The Federal Government also has the responsibility to strengthen governance institutions for the effectiveness of social protection programmes. It is her duty to provide accountability and transparency mechanisms, including donor-funded technical support in MDAs. The Federal Government has to provide national registration platforms where information about beneficiaries will be made available and ensure that beneficiaries are informed about programme design and procedural issues as well as fair grievance processing which is crucial for sustained donor involvement.



The Federal Government has the responsibility of creating awareness for social protection at the three tiers of government - federal, state and local government.


### **Roles of Development Partners**

Development partners are key agencies who work in partnership with multilateral organisations to reduce poverty and vulnerability in developing countries and to tackle critical humanitarian needs and development challenges so that they can be managed with more ease.

Development partners have the mandate to support and strengthen institutions involved in social protection in Nigeria. They should support institutional coordination mechanisms by facilitating inter-sectoral working group consisting, for instance, Women Affairs and Social Development, Education, Health, Agriculture and Finance Ministries. They are also involved in funding and implementing social protection activities alongside government, donors, international NGOs and civil society. They play a supportive role in enhancing capacity for effective service delivery. Development partners are important sources of funding and technical support for developing countries. Such funds supplement resources that are allocated through the national budgets.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Civil Society Organisations**

Civil society organisations play a role in advocating for funds from the national budget to be channelled towards social protection, implementing social protection programmes, monitoring



programme implementation, and making recommendations on how to extend coverage.

In enlisting the roles played by the civil society in eradicating poverty, United Nations (2011) identified the underlisted:

1. Partner with governments and the private sector by investing and creating innovative practical solutions for the poor and marginalised people.
2. Focus on sharing knowledge and best practices to help developing countries in developing and implementing its social policies to eradicate poverty.
3. Empower communities to eradicate poverty and promote social development.
4. Help governments to promote open, transparent governance and a justice system that is fair, restorative and equally available to all.
5. Promote the Social Protection Floor Initiative which provides a minimum level of income and livelihood security for all.
6. Invest in innovation for education and health to have a quality education system that will help young people overcome poverty and make public health affordable to the poor.
7. Improve social services programmes to make them more effective and targeted at the poor.
8. Invest in youth, older people and persons with disabilities, including those in poverty, to participate fully in their society and have a standard of living that empowers them.




## PAST SOCIAL PROTECTION EXPERIENCES

Several poverty alleviation policies and programmes implemented by various Nigerian governments in the past had social protection orientation, though they were not so termed. Such programmes include the implementation of the following programmes (though not specifically targeted at the poor) in the states that constituted the former Western Region under the ideology of Awoism:

- Free education at all levels;
- Free health services for all, both curative and preventive;
- Integrated rural development; and
- Full and gainful employment (Omoboriowo, 1982).

The Operation Feed the Nation Programme (OFN) was an agricultural programme of the Federal Government that took place from 1976-80 aimed at increasing local food production. Following from this was the Green revolution programme - a major agricultural policy of the Federal Government which was an aspect of the Fourth Development Plan. It was introduced in April 1980 to enhance self-sufficiency in food production by introducing modern technology into the country's agricultural sector such as high yielding varieties of seeds, fertilisers and tractors (Ogwumike, 2001).




In the period from 1986 to 1990s, the Federal Government established the Department of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI) aimed at improving infrastructure and the social conditions of people in the hinterland; the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to combat unemployment; the People's Banking of Nigeria (PBN) to make credit available to less privileged Nigerians and The Better Life Programme (BLP) aimed at improving the life of rural women. The programme was later replaced by Family Support Programme (FSP). Other programmes such as National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), The Strategic Grains Reserve Authority (SGRA) and the Accelerated Crop Production (ACP) were meant to equip and improve the operations of peasant farmers as well as improve their income and well-being. To assist in eradicating illiteracy as a cause of poverty, the Nomadic and Adult Education Programmes were established (Obadan, 2002).

**In the Transport Sector**, the Federal Urban Mass Transit Programme was established in 1988 - new buses were provided for public transportation and loan schemes assisted cooperatives and private operators acquire vehicles for transport.

**In the Housing Sector**, a Sites and Services Scheme commenced in 1987 to increase the supply of land for residential development by all income groups.

**Financial Sector Programmes** included 1989/90: the National Economic Reconstruction Fund which provided long-term loans with low interest rates to promote small and medium scale enterprises; the People's Bank of Nigeria extended credit to the




poor who had difficulties accessing credit facilities available in the commercial and merchant banks; and the Community Banking Scheme that provided credit to small scale producers.

**Health Sector Programmes** include the Primary Health Care Scheme, which aims at providing at least one health centre in every local government; and the Guinea-worm Eradication Programme, launched in 1988 with assistance of donor agencies including UNICEF. The effectiveness of the PHC programme was hampered by inadequate funding from the LGAs, and lack of equipment, essential drugs, and trained manpower.

**In the Education Sector**, the Nomadic Education Programme developed curricula for nomadic education, trained nomadic teachers, and provided infrastructure for the nomadic schools.

At the onset of the Fourth Republic in 1999, the Federal Government introduced The Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) early in 2000 as a stop gap to address the problems of unemployment and in 2001 replaced it with the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). The National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC) was also established as the coordinating body for all poverty eradication programmes. The following were some of the poverty reduction programmes of NAPEP:


- (i) **Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES)** which dealt with productivity improvement, credit delivery, technology development and enterprise promotion;

- 
- (ii) **Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS)** which dealt with the provision of potable and irrigation water, transport (rural and urban), rural energy and power support;
  - (iii) **Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS)** which addressed special education, primary healthcare services, food security provisions, micro and macro credits delivery, rural telecommunications facilities, and provision of mass transit; and
  - (iv) **Natural Resource Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS)** which dealt with harnessing agriculture, water and solid minerals.

The 2004 **National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)** focused on Nigeria's commitment to sustainable growth, and poverty reduction. NEEDS was anchored on three pillars:

- 1) empowering people and improving social service delivery;
- 2) fostering economic growth, in particular in the non-oil private sector; and
- 3) enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of government, while improving governance.

The National Planning Commission (NPC) drafted a social protection strategy in 2004, while the National Social Insurance Trust Fund drafted a social security strategy in 2009. However, both strategies did not acquire the much needed political will to transit



from draft to adoption as a national policy by the Federal Government. However, a number of social protection programmes were funded by different actors which included government, donors, international NGOs and civil society. Some social assistance programmes were also implemented in an adhoc manner by a range of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) at state level and/or funded by international donors. These included Conditional Cash Transfer for girls' education (Bauchi, Katsina and Kano, through the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank, a child savings account in Bayelsa and a disability grant in Jigawa. There were also various health waivers, education support such as free uniforms and nutrition support. HIV and AIDS programmes with aspects of social protection at state level included nutrition, health and education support. Others were labour market programmes at federal and state level, public works programmes, agricultural subsidies/inputs and youth skills and employment programmes (FES, 2016).

At the Federal Government level, the In Care of The People (COPE) was implemented. It provided Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) to households with children of basic school age headed by poor females, aged, physically challenged, vesicovaginal fistula (VVF) patients as well as HIV and AIDS patients. The aim was to break intergenerational transfer of poverty and reduce the vulnerability of the core poor.

Households received a monthly Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) for one year and then a lump sum Poverty Reduction Accelerator Investment (PRAI). The BIG ranged from \$10 to \$33 depending on the number of children in the household; a further \$50 per month was withheld as compulsory savings, which was provided as the PRAI (up to \$560) to the head of the household. Entrepreneurship and life skills training were provided to beneficiaries to increase the impact of the PRAI. The payments were subject to two conditions: the enrolment and retention (80%) of children in basic education (Primary 1 to junior secondary education) and participation in all free health care programmes. Coverage of the programme was limited, reaching only about 22,000 households. This results in coverage of less than 0.001% of the poor (FES, 2016).

**Table 1: Coverage of Social Protection Programmes in Nigeria**

Programme	Projected Coverage (No of HH/% of Poor)	Actual Coverage (No of HH/% of Poor)
COPE	Unavailable	22,000 HH/ <0.001% of poor HH
CCT Girls Education	Kano- Scaling up to all eligible girls in LGAs where CCT was implemented	12,000 girls/0.002% of poor HH in Kano (9.2million population) Poverty incidence: 60%
CCT Girls Education	Katsina	7,000 girls/0.001% of poor people in Katsina (6m population) Poverty Incidence: 70%
CHBIS	100% Informal Sector workers (Expected to cover 112m Nigerians in the informal sector)	Unavailable

**Source:** Holmes and Akinrimisi (2012)




Table 1 shows low coverage of the social protection programmes implemented in Nigeria. The highest coverage was the CCT girls education programme in Kano which recorded a 0.002 coverage.

The Maternal and Child Health Care (MCH) programme was part of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) initiated in 2008 to accelerate achievement of MDGs 4 and 5. It provided free primary health care for children under five and primary and secondary care for pregnant women up to six weeks after childbirth. Although it was not specifically targeted at the poor, it was included in the social protection in the light of the high rates of child and maternal mortality that affect more of the poor. The programme was implemented in 12 states, with coverage of 851,198 women and girls (less than 0.01% of the poor). As it was with COPE, each state was expected to provide matching funds of 50% of the amount as counterpart funding for the scheme (FES, 2016).

The Community-based Health Insurance Scheme (CBHIS) aims at protecting the informal sector and marginalised groups against the burden of high health expenditures by pooling risks within a community. The package was geared towards national health development by contributing to the achievement of national and international targets such as the MDGs and the National Strategic Health Development Plan. It aims at providing essential cost-effective maternal, neo-natal and child health services and control of highly prevalent diseases that contribute to the high level of disease burden in Nigeria. The awareness of the programme is very low.





### **Impediments to Social Protection Policies in Nigeria**


Some of the factors that may have accounted for the failure of past poverty-related programmes (World Bank 1996; Hagen-Zanker and Holmes 2012; ILO 2017) include the following:

1. Lack of targeting mechanisms for the poor - the fact that most of the programmes did not focus directly on the poor.
2. Political and policy instability and related policy changes prevented continuous progress.
3. Inadequate coordination of the various programmes in various institutions, agencies and Ministries.
4. Overextended scope of activities of most institutions, resulting in resources being spread too thinly on too many activities.
5. Inappropriate programme design reflecting lack of involvement of beneficiaries in the formulation and implementation of programmes.
6. Absence of effective collaboration and complementation among the three tiers of government.
7. Absence of agreed poverty reduction agenda that could be used by all concerned – Federal Government, State Governments, Local Governments, NGOs, and the International Donor Community.




- 
8. Most of the programmes lacked mechanisms for their sustainability.
  9. One of the key concerns is the limited coverage and reach of existing programmes. This is reflected in the small scale of programmes run by government and development partners which cover between a few hundred households and a few thousand. COPE, for instance, reached only 0.001% of the poor and represented less than 5% of the total funds allocated from the MDGs-DRG to MDAs at the federal level. The target population in Nigeria is too small to make a significant impact on poverty at a national level.
  10. Non-domestication of, and operationalisation of some global conventions and agreements such as child's rights and the African Youth Charter. The Child Rights Act, passed in 2003, defines all persons under the age of 18 years as children, outlining specific protections and prohibitions necessary to meet the mandate of providing all care necessary for child survival, well-being and development. It covers child trafficking, child labour and child abuse, at the highest levels. Furthermore, the Act has been passed in only 24 states, significantly undermining its effectiveness. The potential conceptual linkages between these laws and social protection have not been made. Therefore, given the current state of legislation and regulation, the transformative and social equity potential of social protection is limited.

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11. Nigeria's spending on social protection is considered low compared to other sub-Saharan African countries. Comparative analysis on per capita GDP to social protection for six sub-Saharan African countries, including Nigeria, indicates that though the richest country among the six, Nigeria spends a lower share of GDP on social protection.
  12. Policy gaps do exist. In the case of COPE, the objectives were multiple (health, education and investment). The programme's design is not necessarily well suited to the needs of households. For instance, the programme expects households to graduate from the programme within one year, through investment in productive activities by means of the poverty reduction accelerator investment (PRAI). However, poor households, especially the labour-constrained ones which COPE specifically targets (e.g. single-headed households, elderly households, those with HIV and AIDS patients) may not have the capacity to take advantage of such activities. Existing evidence suggests that extremely poor households need a longer-term combination of both economic and social support, with investment in complementary programmes and services, to support their progress out of safety nets into economically viable livelihoods.
  13. There is a lack of effective collaboration and coordination among government departments and civil society organisations. The institutions charged with protecting the safety and well-being of Nigeria's children are weak. Child protection is not prioritised, even in those ministries for



which it is an objective, for example Women Affairs and Social Development and Employment, Labour and Productivity. Indeed, these ministries, as in many countries, are typically among the most marginalised and underfunded. Staffing is inadequate, capacity is limited and data collection and coordination are almost non-existent. While a wide variety of national and international NGO funders are involved with protection issues, coordination between sectors is also low. Some states including Anambra and Ekiti had operated a cash transfer scheme in which selected elderly persons benefited.

14. Institutions charged with protecting the safety and well-being of Nigeria's children are weak. Child protection is not prioritised, even in those ministries for which it is an objective, for example Women Affairs and Social Development and Employment, Labour and Productivity. Indeed, these ministries, as in many countries, are typically among the most marginalised and underfunded. Staffing is inadequate, capacity is limited and data collection and coordination (Hagen-Zanker & Holmes, 2012).
15. Political commitment to social protection is very variable, at both federal and state level. Social protection is not a key priority for the Federal Government, as reflected by the limited funding available for it. Furthermore, as there is no ministry to champion social protection causes, there is no drive to develop social protection policy. States have been given the responsibility for COPE expansion through a mechanism called the Conditional Grant Scheme – a financing mechanism which requires states to match federal expenditure. However, only one-third of all states have



committed to co-funding COPE, and coverage is estimated at less than 0.001% of the poor.

16. In comparison with other African countries, the government's allocation to social protection is low. Arising from this is the fact that the monthly grant ranges from \$10 to \$33, depending on the number of children in the household (up to a maximum of five). This is low in relation to household need, especially in large households (particularly in the north, where polygamy is common), and the decreasing purchasing power of the Naira, Nigeria's currency, due to food and fuel price inflation.
17. Fragmentation of approaches and projects across the country is a matter of concern. Given current limited levels of coverage, lack of monitoring capacity and limitations in delivering quality services in the country, Nigerian policymakers and development partners should consider the relative importance and budget allocated towards the conditional features of cash transfers (Hagen-Zanker & Holmes, 2012).

## NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK AND CURRENT PROGRAMMES OF SOCIAL PROTECTION IN NIGERIA

The social protection policy measures initiated by the Federal Government in 2016 and formally introduced to Nigerians in 2017 are classified into 8 categories as follows: education and health services, social housing, livelihood enhancement and employment, social insurance schemes, traditional family and community support and legislation and regulation.


### ***Education and Health Services***

Policy measure 1: Free school meals will be provided to all pupils in public primary schools.

Policy measure 2: Provide scholarship, learning materials, uniforms and cash transfers for children in poor households and children living with disabilities.

Policy measure 3: All children and adults living with disabilities are to have access to free health care, education, and required special services and assistive devices.

Policy Measure 4: Provide free health care services for pregnant women, lactating mothers, children under-5, the aged (people over 65 years old) and people living with disabilities.



Policy Measure 5: Universal access to Health Insurance Scheme (HIS) or CBHIS and/or other social health insurance schemes.

***Social Welfare and Child Protection***

Policy Measure 6: Provide health services, psychosocial support, and counselling to survivors of violence against persons, child labour, child abuse, child rape, and human trafficking.

***Social Housing***

Policy Measure 7: Provide decent and affordable housing for the homeless, the monetary poor, and families living in overcrowded and unhealthy conditions.

***Livelihood Enhancement and Employment***

Policy Measure 8: Unemployment insurance and non-cash unemployment benefits to job seekers.

Policy Measure 9: Labour based cash transfer/Public Works Programmes for youths, persons with disabilities and the unemployed.

Policy Measure 10: Provide support for sustainable livelihood through skills training, access to land, inputs for smallholder farmers, affirmative action for youth and women's employment, and access to financial services for micro and small enterprises and cooperatives.

Policy Measure 11: Provide affordable child care services for children under 5 to enable parents engage in productive activities.

  
***Social Insurance Schemes***

Policy Measure 12: Contributory pensions available to all citizens 60 years of age and above.

***Social Assistance***

Policy Measure 13: Provide cash transfers to families and cash for work schemes which are activated at the onset of emergencies.

Policy Measure 14: Provide non-contributory pensions for all citizens over 60 years of age, as well as cash and food grants for poor families, orphans, street children, and others vulnerable to harmful cultural practices.

***Traditional Family and Community Support***


Policy Measure 15: Support family and community-based mechanisms and systems for the intended beneficiaries to respond to shocks and extreme poverty.

***Legislation and Regulation***

Policy Measure 16: Provide a legal framework that specifically protects intended beneficiaries including children through inheritance rights, birth registration, child care services and breast feeding.

***The Constitution and Social Protection***

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) under the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, Chapter 2 (Sections 16 & 17) provides the basis for the provision of social protection in the country. The basic principles include the State's obligations to:

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- a. secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity;
  - b. provide suitable and adequate shelter, suitable and adequate food, reasonable national minimum living wage, old age care and pensions, and unemployment, sick benefits and welfare of the disabled;
  - c. ensure that all citizens have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment; and ensure that provision is made for public assistance in deserving cases or other conditions of need.



## THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION


The key aspirations of the National Development Frameworks and Social Protection (NDFSP) are:

- a. Optimising human and natural resources to achieve rapid economic growth; and
- b. Translating that growth into equitable social development for all citizens with equal opportunity for improved living standards.

The policy considers social protection goals as being in line with national development aspirations whereby expenditures on social protection are necessary investments in people.


Accordingly, the policy provides the framework not only to understand the weaknesses of the poor, but also as a measure to mobilise the assets and capabilities of individuals, households and communities for a sustainable human development.

The Federal Executive Council (FEC) on May 29, 2017 approved the first comprehensive National Social Protection Policy for Nigeria. The policy is stated as a framework which seeks to provide social justice, equity and inclusive growth using a transformative mechanism for mitigating poverty and unemployment in Nigeria.



The office of the Vice President has been designated to oversee the following six schemes adopted from the Social Protection Policy of the Federal Government.

- i. **The Teach Nigeria Scheme (TNS):** In this scheme, the Federal Government intends to recruit 500,000 graduates as teachers, who will be trained and deployed to raise the quality of teachers in public schools all over Nigeria. They would be deployed to work in their local communities as teachers, agriculture workers and health support workers. The graduands would be receiving a monthly stipend of N30,000 for a period of two years.
- ii. **The Youth Employment Agency (YEA):** In this scheme, the government intends to train 300,000 to 500,000 non-graduate youths in skill acquisition programme and vocational training. While they are in training, they will receive some stipends and after their training they will be self-sustaining in their communities. These youths will be selected from all the states including the Federal Capital Territory.
- iii. **The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT):** In this scheme the government will be paying N5000 per month to one million extremely poor Nigerians this year on one condition, which is that they will enrol their children in school and also have them immunised. This would last for an initial period of two years with particular emphasis in the North East of Nigeria where internally displaced persons abound.

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- iv. **The Home-grown School Feeding (HSF):** This is the government's scheme in which pupils in the primary school will get one meal per day. This targets about 5.5 million pupils.
  - v. **The Free Education Scheme for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM):** This scheme entails paying tuition for about 100,000 STEM students in tertiary institutions. The government is allocating about N5 billion to this scheme in this year's budget.
  - vi. **The Micro Credit Scheme (MCS):** This is being packaged for about one million artisans and market men and women and the government intends spending about N60 billion as loan to them. Loan facility will range between ten to one hundred thousand naira.

## **INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION**


The National Policy on Social Protection (NPSP) draws inspiration from aforementioned International Agreements and Conventions to which Nigeria is signatory to notably:

- a. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights which enshrines right to social security (1948);
- b. The African Charter on Human and People's Rights and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which advance social protection with the human rights approach (1981);

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- c. The Convention on the Rights of the Child which specifically emphasises children’s rights to social protection(1989);
  - d. The UN Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women(1995);
  - e. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and its successor, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with its commitment to poverty reduction;
  - f. The African Union (AU) Livingstone Transformative Agenda (2006) which incorporates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
  - g. ILO Convention 102 which sets minimum standard on social security. This policy considers social protection as both a right and an empowerment instrument, and therefore, provides the framework for all the stakeholders to work together to fulfil the fundamental rights of citizens as endorsed nationally and globally; and
  - h. ILO Conference on Social Protection Floor Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) which recommended that member states establish and maintain social protection floors as a fundamental element of their national social security system.

**Linking Social Protection and Sustainable Development:**

There is a link between social protection and sustainable development. First, social protection can play a role in inclusive cial



development, in that it can serve as a vehicle and a driver for sustainable developments. A major reason why the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 was because the former failed to pay appropriate attention to social protection. Social protection is an important component of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which contains the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The commitment of the SDGs to social protection is reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Countries are called on, for example, to “implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including national floors. Most prominently, SDG 1.3 calls upon countries to implement nationally appropriate social protection systems for all, including floors for reducing and preventing poverty. The importance of social protection for sustainable development is also reflected in universal health coverage (SDG 3.8), gender equality, including to recognise and value unpaid and domestic care (SDG 5.4), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8.5) and greater equality (SDG 10.4)(ILO, 2017).

The SDGs in acknowledging and reinforcing efforts to expand social protection is, therefore, committed to implementing: “nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 [achieving] substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable” (Goal 1, Target 3).

## EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES IN AFRICA

Approaches to social protection in Africa has changed over time with a progression in social protection from formal and informal insurance, to safety nets, and then to poverty targeting and categorical provision such as cash transfers to vulnerable people. This enables them plan their expenditure to meet immediate basic consumption needs as well as provide the opportunity for investment in productive activities.

Implementation of social protection programmes across African countries indicates positive potential developmental effects and it also an evidence that cash transfers can be affordable, even for developing country governments.

Scaling up existing cash transfer programmes to national level, and offering full coverage of the eligible population (ten per cent of households in Malawi and Zambia and 19 per cent in Kenya) would cost between 0.5 and 1.7 per cent of GDP, or 2–4 per cent of the total government budget in these three countries (McCord, 2009).

Cash transfer programme in Namibia reduced the incidence of poverty by 22 percent and the severity of poverty by 45 percent (Levine, van der Berg and Yu, 2009). In South Africa, a social transfer programme reduced inequality by seven percentage points.

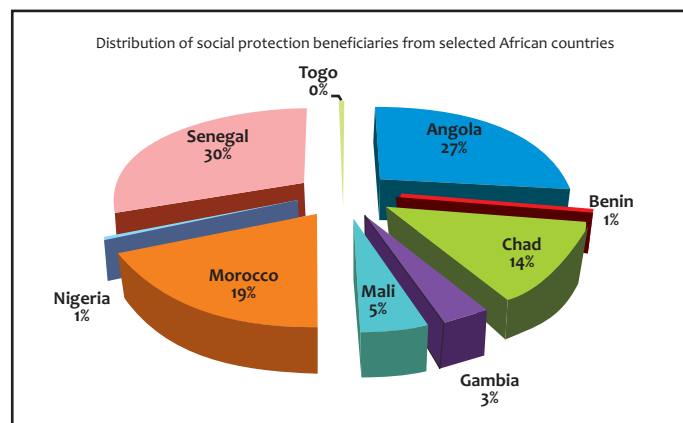
**Table 2: Examples of Social Protection Practices in Africa**

1	Algeria	Social Safety Net Programme	Unconditional Cash Transfer Public Works (Conditional Transfers)
2	Cameroun	School Feeding Programme	Conditional School feeding Take home rations for school girls
3	Ethiopia	Productive Safety Net Programme	Public Works: Conditional Cash Transfers and/or in kind, food transfers (80%)  Unconditional direct transfers to those unable to work, such as children, the elderly, people living with HIV (20%)  Flexible delivery of food transfers: crisis response and monthly deliveries  Complementary packages of agricultural support (credit, investments and technical support)
4	Ghana	National Health Insurance Scheme  Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty	Conditional and Unconditional Social Insurance on access to health care  Unconditional Cash Transfers
5	Kenya	Home Grown School Feeding Programme	Conditional School feeding  Support for local farmers
6	Lesotho	Old Age Pension	Unconditional Cash Transfers
7	Malawi	Social Cash Transfer Schemes  Farm Input Subsidy Programme	Unconditional Cash Transfers to ultra-poor and labour constrained households Community-based targeting mechanism  Agricultural conditional support: maize, tobacco or cotton packs
8	Mauritius	Universal Basic Pension Scheme	Non-contributory, cash transfers and health services  Old Age Pension  Disability pension  Survivor pension' (widow and orphans)
9	Namibia	Nutritional Support to Orphans and Vulnerable Children  Old age Pension	Conditional cash transfers  Unconditional cash transfers
10	Nigeria	In care of the People (COPE)	Conditional Cash Transfers
11	Rwanda	Vision 2020 Umurenge programme	Public Works (conditional transfers)  Unconditional cash transfers (for those unable to work)

12	South Africa	Child Support Grant Expanded Public Works Programme	Unconditional Cash Transfers Public Works linked to access to employment and delivering certain public goods (several are environmental)
13	Zambia	School Feeding Programme	Unconditional provision of food to orphans and vulnerable children through community schools HIV/AIDS education in schools School based agriculture pilot project (garden)

Source: UNDP 2016

As can be observed in Table 2, COPE is the only social protection programme in Nigeria considered adequate to be captured in the UNDP document as at 2016. This is indicative of poor implementation of social protection programme in Nigeria. Nevertheless, a study by Aiyede et. al. (2017) on COPE indicated that conditional cash transfer could contribute to poverty alleviation.



**Fig. 1 Distribution of Social Protection Beneficiaries from selected African Countries**


From Fig. 1, it can be observed that out of the eight countries listed and scored, two of them have significant share of the beneficiaries of social protection - Senegal and Angola. The two countries have more than fifty percent share of the beneficiaries with the remaining six sharing less than a half. Of these moreover, Nigeria and Benin Republic have only 1% each. Considering the size of Nigeria, this is not a good performance in social protection.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made in view of the foregoing discussions.

1. There is a need to raise the awareness and participatory levels of social protection in the country. The Ministries of Information and Social Orientation should be saddled with this responsibility.
2. Given the import of social protection, the Federal Government needs to increase the coverage which currently stands at about 1.00%.
3. There is a need to scale up funding for social protection programmes. This can be done through budgetary increase and, or donor assistance.
4. The government needs to build capacity for Ministry staff in the public sector who are expected to efficiently carry out the responsibilities and processes associated with social protection.
5. To facilitate 1-4 above, transparency and accountability must be entrenched in the programmes - in the aspects of selection of beneficiaries, among others.

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6. Social service delivery and infrastructural provisioning need to be reasonably expanded to facilitate social protection programmes and the delivery of the benefits. This should indeed give some credence to the claim of transformational perspective inserted into the social protection policy.
  7. There is a need to generate political commitment to social protection in Nigeria. A starting point would be to initiate some measure of social equity through income re-distribution, particularly from the political office holders for investment in social protection programmes.
  8. The civil society sector needs to embark on advocacy and related social action to compel the state to make socio-economic rights of the citizens justiciable – by enshrining it into the Nigerian constitution. This will make the state more accountable in the aspect of social protection responsibility.
  9. The Community-based Health Insurance Scheme should be scaled up significantly and vigorously pursued through awareness programmes, funding and grassroots participation. This will go a long way towards reducing the health burden of the poor.
  10. A more effective coordinating framework for social protection conception and implementation involving major stakeholders should be evolved to strengthen service delivery processes.

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## Author's Profile

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Professor Ifeanyi P. Onyeonoru holds a PhD in Industrial Sociology from the University of Ibadan. He was:

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Professor Onyeonoru was:

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- He has been an external examiner to various universities for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Nigeria and abroad, including examination of doctoral thesis at the Departments of Sociology, University of the Western Cape, South Africa, 2015 and University of South Africa, (UNISA) in 2017.
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