



**MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION**

**OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY**

**SPEECH BY**

**SIMON K. CHELUGUI, EGH**

**THE CABINET SECRETARY**

**MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION**

**DURING THE NATIONAL COMMEMORATION OF  
THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD**

**16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2021**

**RADISSON BLU HOTEL, ARBORETUM**

Our Chief Guests, Hon. Lady Justice Teresa Matheka,

Chief Administrative Secretary, Hon. Patrick Ole Ntutu

Principal Secretary, State Department for Social Protection, Mr. Nelson  
Marwa

Country Representative Save the Children, Ms Yvonne Arunga,

Children representatives present, Ruqayya Omar and Amos Kipyegon

Governments Officials Present,

Representatives of Development Partners,

Children,

Parents,

Members of the Fourth Estate

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies & Gentlemen

**Good Morning,**

It gives me great pleasure to join you today as we mark this year's Day of the African Child (DAC) 2021, celebrations. This day was first celebrated in Kenya in June 1991 and has since become an annual event that provides us with an opportunity to take stock of the gains and gaps in safeguarding the rights and welfare of our children.

This year's celebration is being commemorated under the theme: **“30 Years after the Adoption of the Charter: Accelerating Implementation of Agenda 2040 for “An Africa Fit for Children”**. This theme emphasizes on the need for us to create an environment that allows children to thrive and enjoy holistic growth and development and hence fully implement the **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child**, other laws and the commitments led by Agenda 2040.

As a country, our quest for the successful implementation of **Agenda 2040** and our achievements so far, have been anchored on:

- our desire to create an enabling legal and policy framework for child rights and welfare;

- our continued endeavor to establish and strengthen institutions, structures and programmes for the effective implementation of the rights of children;
- the need for coordinated, informed and timely service delivery; and
- appreciation of partnership and collaborative efforts.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Besides the African Charter, Kenya is also a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (UNCRC) on which the Children's Act 2001 is based on.

After years of negotiations, am happy to announce that, the children bill 2021 is now before the National Assembly. This new law for children seeks to operationalise the provisions of the Constitution on child rights as well as to address challenges necessitated by changes in the social, economic, political and technological environments of children. My appeal is for parliament to enact this bill in the best interest of our children.

There are many laws and policies that govern all sectors that are critical for the promotion and protection of children. My Ministry through the National Council for Children's Services (NCCS) offers the coordination and oversight of the implementation of all these rights.

The Government continues to cushion children from the effects of extreme poverty and other vulnerabilities, by allocating funds for social protection programmes that include Cash Transfers for Orphans and Vulnerable Children, Older Persons, Persons with Severe Disabilities, the Hunger Safety Net and the Presidential Secondary School Bursary, among others.

In the National Budget for next Financial Year that was presented a few days ago, **37.8 billion** was allocated to the social protection sector. Additionally, the Government continues to support the Street Families Rehabilitation Trust Fund to address issues of street connected families, and children in our urban centres.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The importance of education to a nation can never be over emphasized. To this end, the Government has sets aside funds to implement Free Primary and Day Secondary Educational as well as the Competency Based Curriculum among other efforts, to ensure that children are enrolled and retained in schools until completion at the various levels of education.

Regrettably, education is among the sectors that were hit hard by Covid-19 pandemic. The Government together with its partners, is committed to exploring ways and means of recovering lost time and replenishing resources to ensure that learning in schools continue with minimal disruption and that learners, teachers and non-teaching staff are protected from this deadly disease.

To promote access to good health, nutrition and protection from immunizable diseases, the Government continues to support County Governments to provide health care to all Kenyan's including children.

The Government continues to immunize children under 5 years of age free of charge against immunizable diseases; monitor their growth and also provide nutritional supplements to them.

The Government also provides free medical care to children in public secondary schools through NHIF and is currently considering provision

of universal healthcare to all Kenyans. The Government is also keen on promoting adolescent sexual and reproductive health, and has established institutions that provide this segment of children with necessary information and services.

The Government is committed to ensuring that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. And for children who find themselves in the justice system, the Government is keen on ensuring that children are handled with dignity, fairness and timely.

In recognition of the importance the Government places on protection of Children, Child Protection Services were categorised as essential services by the Government.

As a ministry we appreciate the partnership we have with the Judiciary when it comes to children matters. We appreciate the fact that children courts have been operating virtually during this pandemic to ensure justice is served to all children in our country.

To further strengthen coordination of children matters, the Government created gender and children desks in all police stations in the country and established a 24-hour toll free helpline 116 for reporting violations of child rights.

The Government continues to create awareness on child rights and welfare to the citizens of this great nation, to ensure that no child suffers any kind of discrimination.

Notable among milestones in this regard are: the recognition and categorisation of intersex children in the 2019 National Housing and

Population Census Report; and the establishment of the anti-human trafficking and online child protection unit at the DCI, to address issues of child trafficking, and online child sexual and abuse exploitation.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At this juncture, I want to appreciate the work of every agency in the sector, and urge all of us to continue in our individual and collective commitment to serve our children. In the spirit of Agenda 2040, let us endeavour to make our families, communities and our country fit for children.

Our first five-year cycle report on the implementation of the 10 aspirations of Agenda 2040 is being prepared and will be submitted to the Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of Children. It is my sincere hope that once the Committee evaluates our report and communicates to us our next steps, we shall continue serving our children in the same spirit.

As I conclude, let me leave you with the wise words of the Late President Nelson Mandela that ***“there can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children”***.

**Ladies and Gentlemen** It is now my pleasure to invite, the Honorable Lady Justice Teresa Matheka to give us the Keynote Address from our Chief Guest, the Chief Justice of the Republic of Kenya, Lady Justice Martha Koome.

**THANK-YOU**

**GOD BLESS THE CHILDREN OF KENYA, GOD BLESS THE CHILDREN OF AFRICA**