



Concept Note

Social Protection for the Poorest in Africa – Learning from Experience

8-10th September 2008

Kampala, Uganda

1. The conference

Development Research & Training, the Chronic Poverty Research Centre and the Brooks World Poverty Institute will co-host a conference on social protection in Kampala, Uganda, 8-10th September 2008. The conference will bring together practitioners, researchers and policy-makers involved in the development, design, and implementation of social protection programmes, particularly those which aim to address extreme and chronic poverty, with the aim of learning from existing programmes and informing the extension of social protection in Africa.

2. Why this conference?

Interest in social protection in Africa continues to grow. In part the heightened interest is due to the growing recognition that growth strategies are essential, but by themselves insufficient, to fully address persistent and sometimes deepening poverty and vulnerability among large sections of the region's population. Declining prices for agricultural produce, growing unemployment, lack of job-creation, deterioration of real wages, and the effects of HIV/AIDS have all combined to create a complex set of challenges for the anti-poverty agenda, and social protection is recognized as an effective response to a range of social and economic problems which arise from livelihood shocks and stresses. Combining growth strategies with social protection represents the surest way to achieve economic and social development.

Some African countries have "taken the bull by its horns" and have embarked on a range of pilot schemes, focusing initially on cash transfers as one type of means of testing the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of using particular social protection instruments. It is important that the lessons from these experiences from across the African region are shared as widely as possible in order to inform both existing and newly proposed programmes. A key objective of the Conference is to provide a forum to share and learn from the

experiences of practitioners who are implementing social protection-focused programmes. It is also important that we use this knowledge to move forward towards the development of wider and stronger social protection policies and strategies

Several African governments are also currently developing social protection policies and programmes, as a response to, and follow-up of, the Inter-Governmental Regional Conference on Social Protection which was held at Livingstone, Zambia in March 2006. The Zambia conference, which resulted in the “Livingstone Call for Action”, among other things, outlined the need for the mobilisation of all stakeholders, including governments, parliaments, civil society and the donor community to address chronic poverty, deprivation, exclusion and to promote human rights. The conference in particular called for greater cooperation between African and other countries in the sharing and exchange of information, as well as experiences and action on social protection and cash transfers. Further, the conference emphasized the importance of building platforms and consensus, as well as deepening debate at national and regional levels.

Yet nearly two years after Livingstone the pace of adoption and/or implementation of social protection programmes and strategies remains slow. Among the challenges which many African Governments still face is that of securing reliable long term funding for social protection, both from national budgets and from development partners. Other countries are yet to put together costed national social transfer plans that are integrated within National Development Plans and within National Budgets, which development partners can supplement. Investment in institutional and human resource capacity and accountability systems also remains a challenge.

The above challenges notwithstanding, lessons can be learned from researchers, analysts and practitioners – especially those who are currently implementing social protection programmes both in Africa and other developing countries. The learning could be focused on a range of issues in social protection – from conceptualization and design, to policy-making and implementation. The Kampala Conference will specifically aim to harness this learning and to use it to inform the next steps of the social protection agenda in Africa. It will provide a forum for discussing how to scale up existing pilots to reach all of those in poverty; what are the challenges in developing political support for the extension of social protection, and ensuring appropriate financing; and the constraints and opportunities involved in moving from single policy instruments to integrated anti-poverty programmes.

3. Broad objectives of the conference

The broad objectives of the proposed conference are:

- ◆ Learning from regional experiences to-date in:
 - developing political support for social protection
 - designing social protection programmes
 - delivery and implementation options
 - assessing progress towards social protection strategies;
- ◆ Informing the African agenda on social protection and future developments.
- ◆ Exploring opportunities for situating social protection within broader social and economic development policy in African countries

These objectives will be achieved by bringing together policy-makers, researchers and practitioners working on social protection in the region, and internationally, in a constructive dialogue aimed at

- ◆ identifying the key issues emerging from social protection programmes in the region;
- ◆ sharing lessons and best practices in the design and implementation of social protection programmes and strategies;

- ♦ creating a platform which will further galvanise action towards adoption of effective social protection strategies in the region;

4. Expected outputs

- ♦ Conference reports, a publically-available website containing papers, reports and other resources capturing knowledge and experience from practitioners around the world
- ♦ Identification of best practices in design and implementation of social protection strategies which are relevant to the Africa context;
- ♦ Briefings for policy-makers on how to prioritise social protection
- ♦ Media reports
- ♦ A re-affirmation of commitment to the Livingstone Call for Action

5. What key questions will the conference attempt to answer

The conference will focus on five broad questions:

- (1) What are the constraints and opportunities involved in developing sustainable political support for social protection in Africa?
- (2) What might be considered to be an effective mix of instruments in any given situation of extreme or chronic poverty?
- (3) How can we achieve the right scale of implementation of social protection interventions?
- (4) What is required to secure a shift from the current emphasis on single instruments to integrated social protection programmes fully embedded in mainstream development strategy?
- (5) How is the extension of social protection in Africa to be financed?

6. Organisational measures to ensure that the Conference objectives are achieved

Most of the participants will come from the Africa region, representing a cross-section of public servants and policy-makers on the one hand and research and practitioners on the other hand. A key strategy will be to bring to the conference those people who are actively involved in the design and implementation of social protection programmes and strategies, and to use these to share lessons and/or experiences.

Resources will also be allocated to ensuring that a number of people working on social protection from other parts of the world, especially Latin America and South and South East Asia, are able to attend the conference. This will add an important dimension to the learning and discussion, and could help shift some of the discussions about the “impossibility of social protection” in Africa (often citing low capacity, financing, etc.).

All participants will be asked for a short paper (10 pages) to be submitted in advance of the Conference, and made available from the Conference website. A selection of papers will be delivered at the Conference, with a discussant extracting main questions for discussion. A report of the discussion will be prepared.

Conference format. A three-day conference is proposed. We are planning on a total of 80-100 delegates, of whom about 30 will present papers. Days 1 and 2 will consist of plenary sessions and themed sessions.. The papers will be organized around 6-8 broad themes and sub-themes (these are subject to review by a proposed organizing committee).

The final day will be set aside for a high-level Round Table. This event will be designed to report on and disseminate the Conference findings, engage with regional and international organizations, and ensure national and international media coverage.

7. Conference Organizing Committee

Conference organization will be a collaborative arrangement between Development Research and Training, the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC), and key partners. An International Organizing Committee will be formed and will direct and advise on the Conference. This group will comprise distinguished researchers and practitioners in social protection. David Hulme (University of Manchester), Tony Addison (Brooks World Poverty Institute) and Andrew Sheperd (CPRC/ODI) will lead this committee. Sponsors will be welcome to nominate representatives on the Committee.

The detailed management of the Conference will be the responsibility of the members of a Conference Management Committee. This will be led by Charles Lwanga-Ntale of DR&T and Armando Barrientos of the CPRC and is likely to include others both from Uganda (Stephen Kasaija (MGLSD), Sarah Ssewanyana (EPRC), Margaret Kakande (MFPED)) and elsewhere. A number of other CPRC collaborating partners and colleagues will also be involved.

8. Proposed timeline

Date/s	Activity
31 st January '08	Agreement of conference concept & call for abstracts for papers
	Agreement on hosting arrangements for the conference
	Establishment of organizing committee
12 th February '08	Call for abstracts
12 th April '08	Deadline for receiving abstracts
1 st May '08	Communication of decision on accepted abstracts
1 st May '08	Registration of conference participants begins
31 st May '08	Confirmation of key speakers, workshop leaders and facilitators
1 st June '08	Deadline for submission of papers
1 st June '08	Confirmation of funding – clear indications from donors on who will fund what
31 st July '08	Confirmation of participation (with bookings)
15 th August '08	Finalisation of practical conference arrangements
6-7 th Sept '08	Arrival of international delegates
8-10 th Sept '08	Conference days
15 th Oct '08	Finalisation and circulation of workshop report

Background and contacts:

Development Research and Training (DRT)

Development Research and Training is a Ugandan NGO that was established by a team of community development practitioners with extensive experience in community development and the use of participatory training and research methods. DRT's mission is to promote people centred approaches for sustainable development, through participatory training, poverty research, and policy analysis.

Since 1996, DRT has been involved in a wide range of activities that broadly fall under four main areas: institutional analysis and development, poverty research, capacity building, and policy research and engagement. It also provides high quality participatory training, skills development, facilitation of institutional development and participatory research methods. DRT has expertise in social and economic policy, governance, participatory democracy and human development, social protection, decentralisation, women in development, HIV/AIDS, poverty analysis, environment and sustainable development. During the year 2003 DRT (in the personage of Charles Lwanga-Ntale) worked with the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex (Stephen Devereux and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler) to develop an issues paper on Social Protection in Uganda. Also, working in collaboration with the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC), DRT recently made substantial contribution to the Uganda Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development's (MGLSD's) policy engagement process on Social Protection in the country. Similarly, DRT has recently been working with Uganda Reach the Aged Association (URAA), to support and facilitate the development of key Social Protection messages for policy makers. DRT is also currently piloting participatory planning and micro-level poverty monitoring in Kalangala District, carrying out institutional capacity building in four districts with respect to Mental Health programmes.

DRT is a founder member of the Uganda Participatory Development Network (UPDNet), which brings together 45 organisations that promote the use of participatory methodology, mostly PRA/PLA, and related methods.

Chronic Poverty Research Centre

The Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC) is an international partnership of universities, research institutes and NGOs. The central aim of the CPRC is to create knowledge that contributes to both the speed and quality of poverty reduction, with a focus on those who are trapped in poverty, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

There are three distinct streams of work:

- thematic research – with the objective of deepening the understanding of poverty dynamics and the nature, causes and remedies of chronic poverty, including what the chronically poor already do to try to escape poverty.
- policy analysis – to assess key policy issues and aspects of policy environments and identify effective and sustainable policies to support the chronically poor.
- policy engagement – which aims to contribute to a significant shift in policy through challenging governments, policy-makers and the public about the specific needs, as well as the capabilities, of the chronically poor.

The CPRC highlighted the importance of social protection for the chronically poor in its 2004-5 international *Chronic Poverty Report*. The Uganda *Chronic Poverty Report* of 2005 did the same. It has a research theme devoted to insecurity, risk and vulnerability, led by Armando Barrientos at

University of Manchester, UK, and has supported considerable policy analysis work on social protection.

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For further information please see the conference website at www.chronicpoverty.org