

Sustainable Economic and Social Empowerment of the Ultra-Poor in Kenya – Key Messages

Final Draft, 22nd November 2018

A meeting took place on 31st October 2018 to consider a collective way forward for tackling deep and entrenched poverty in Kenya. It agreed to develop key messages that stakeholders can use within and between institutions concerned with poverty reduction in Kenya. The meeting involved multiple stakeholders¹ and it followed a workshop² entitled ‘Achieving Graduation from Poverty at Scale in Kenya’ held in Nairobi on 29th and 30th October 2018. The messages are:

1. Deep intractable poverty remains across Kenya.

Extreme poverty remains a significant challenge in Kenya and current efforts to reach the *2030 Vision* to eliminate extreme poverty are not on track.

2. Existing investments and approaches by Government and development partners are insufficient to enable the poorest (*ultra-poor*) Kenyans to secure a sustained pathway out of poverty despite many being capable of improving their situation with the right support.

There is a gap in existing efforts to target and effectively assist ultra-poor Kenyans (*the poorest within the 16m Kenyans falling within the ‘extreme poverty’ category*) to help them achieve a sustained pathway out of poverty and resilience to future shocks. Evidence is increasingly demonstrating that ultra-poor Kenyans are unable to benefit from market and livelihoods-oriented interventions³. Tailored and sequenced support is necessary for ultra-poor Kenyans to steadily build social and economic empowerment (*or graduation from poverty*) in line with global, regional and Kenya specific experiences.

3. A national framework will be developed to provide an umbrella to meet a recognised gap to reach the ultra-poor to enable efforts to be scaled and integrated with wider poverty reduction efforts and that can be tailored for implementation across Kenya.

An approach to reduce ultra-poverty will be developed, that is context specific and that can be situated within a broader set of approaches to reduce poverty for at different levels. The purpose of a new collective effort among stakeholders is to ‘*achieve Sustainable Economic and Social Empowerment⁴ of the ultra-poor in Kenya*’.

4. Stakeholders will collaborate to contribute more effectively to the *Big Four* and *Vision 2030* to reduce poverty and achieve food security.

Recognizing the gap in reaching the ultra-poor, and following the workshop, stakeholders from the Government of Kenya, development partners and civil society are committed to collaborate to develop an approach to reduce a systemic gap in reaching the ultra-poor. A technical working group comprising stakeholders across GoK and development partners will be co-convened by the GoK’s Social Protection Secretariat and DFID.

5. Improvisation in approach and attracting innovative finance is necessary at scale to reach and improve the economic and social position of the ultra-poor, alongside the KSEIP, to demonstrate best practice and value for money, for full scale-up across the country.

6. Defining a category of ultra-poor Kenyans and collective measurement indicators is an important step forward.

The ultra-poor targeted by this effort is to be defined technically (*significantly below the \$1.90 a day that defines extreme poverty in Kenya*), along with a nationally coherent system for measuring when poverty thresholds are passed, and it focuses on those that are capable of making the most from a package of support.

¹ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (including SPS and Department for Social Development), Kenya Vision 2030 Secretariat, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Irrigation, Council of Governors, Ministry of Devolution and ASALs (including NDMA), National Treasury, USAID, EU, DFID, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, World Bank and WellSpring Philanthropic Fund.

² See www.graduationfrompovertykenya.org for details.

³ Shepherd, Scott (2018) Sustaining Poverty Escapes in Rural Kenya, Policy Implications Brief, ODI.

⁴ Some stakeholders term this ‘graduation’ though the meaning is very similar.