THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN SUPPORTING AND STRENGTHENING NATIONAL CHILD-SENSITIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES

Background paper for the Sixth International Policy Conference on the African Child (Sixth IPC)

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The African Child Policy Forum

THE AFRICAN CHILD POLICY FORUM (ACPF)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PREFACE

The International Policy Conference on the African Child (IPC) provides a platform for policy dialogue on subjects affecting children in Africa. The 6th International Policy Conference is on the theme "*Social Protection in Africa: Making it work for children*".

Social protection is gaining recognition among African governments as an effective strategy to address deprivation and vulnerability among marginalised groups including children. Many African governments have national social protection frameworks and policies in place and have begun to create institutional arrangements that facilitate programme design and implementation. Yet, progress across African countries has been inconsistent, particularly since the endorsement of the AU Social Protection Framework in 2009. Many questions and gaps remain with respect to – among other things – how social protection contributes to economic growth, how it can incrementally grow and become institutionalised within national processes, and how it can be sustainable, be financed from domestic sources and be nationally owned.

In the 6th IPC, ACPF, together with the AU, governments, CSOs, pan-African and regional treaty bodies, academics and UN agencies, aims to address some of these questions. To inform the policy dialogue, APCF has prepared background papers. This paper entitled *The role of civil society in supporting and strengthening national child-sensitive social protection programmes* is one of them.

The contributions of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the design, implementation and monitoring of child-sensitive social protection programmes have not been optimal in the past. However, gradually CSOs are now engaging in social protection programmes through design, advocacy and delivery of services. In spite of these progressive developments, participation of the civil society remains limited in a number of African countries. This paper provides an overview of the legal and developmental rationale for civil society's involvement and, drawing on the lessons learnt, sheds light on the opportunities and challenges to facilitate improved CSO participation.

We trust that this paper will contribute to the body of knowledge and informs further actions taken by governments, development partners and CSOs themselves in ensuring the participation of national civil society organisations and enabling them make a meaningful contribution towards child-sensitive social protection systems in Africa.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are compelling reasons why civil society organisations (CSOs) should participate in the development of child sensitive social protection (CSSP) policies, laws and programmes in Africa. This paper aims to provide an overview of the legal and developmental rationale for CSO participation, as well describe the role that CSOs have played – and could potentially play –in Africa in formulating and implementing child-sensitive social protection programmes to improve child wellbeing. Drawing on lessons identified from existing initiatives, the paper aims to highlight the challenges that need to be addressed and the opportunities that can be built upon to secure effective CSO participation in government-led national social protection policies and programmes benefiting children across Africa.

The 2009 adoption of the African Union (AU) Social Policy Framework marked an important milestone, and subsequently many countries initiated the development and implementation of national social protection policies and processes. The Framework unequivocally locates responsibility for the provision of social protection on states, explicitly requiring that governments:

> "...*should include civil society in policy-making on social protection, and in programme design, implementation, monitoring and impact evaluation*".

This implies obligations and responsibilities for CSOs to engage alongside governments, to create space for more effective engagement.

Building on progress in social protection policies and programmes across Africa, there is the need to accelerate existing efforts by overcoming a number of constraints. This includes by putting in place more sustainable fiscal arrangements; strengthening accountability of multiple sectors and stakeholders through national platforms and institutional arrangements; and scaling up social protection to include a comprehensive package that reaches all children. This need requires collaborative efforts from all stakeholders, including CSOs.

Based on an extensive literature research and an examination of three country case-studies, specifically South Africa, Uganda and Ghana, it is clearly evidence that CSOs across Africa are, to varying degrees, participating in social protection policy and programme initiatives. Their roles are primarily in the following six areas:

1. Implementation and delivery of social protection services
2. Research, analysis and evaluation of the design, impact and benefits of CSSP policies
3. Advocacy and lobbying for the adoption of appropriate policies, programmes and budgets
4. Partnering with and supporting governments through co-development of policies and programmes, capacity-building and transfer of knowledge
5. Monitoring and holding governments to account for compliance with legal and developmental obligations
6. Providing a collective organisational framework to facilitate CSO participation in social protection processes.

Despite these contributions, CSOs face a number of challenges limiting their effective participation in and contribution to national-led social protection agendas, particularly in relation to policy development. Some of these external challenges relate to their legal status, the absence of platforms to facilitate their engagement, and internal constraints related to CSO capacity and resources.

While there are multiple challenges, there are also a number of opportunities for enhanced CSO contribution to CSSP policies and programmes. These include increasing evidence on the contribution of CSOs and their effective role; increasing democratization and improvements in governance structures for engaging civil society (governments are now more child-friendly than they were five years ago); the emergence of comprehensive social protection systems in some countries; growth in social solidarity across civil society; and a greater emphasis by international NGOS (INGOs) and UNICEF to partner with national CSOs to increase local capacity.

The paper concludes that despite the compelling reasons to include CSOs — and notably national CSOs — in the development of CSSP policies and programmes, their contributions have not been optimized in the past. This trend is being gradually reversed and some positive changes are evident, with more CSOs engaging in programme design, advocacy, delivery of services and monitoring. This has largely been driven by the increasing importance of the role of national CSOs, but also by creation of government-led platforms and processes, and the support of development partners and INGOs for national CSOs that has facilitated their sustained and meaningful participation in social protection policy dialogue. In spite of these progressive developments, CSO participation, notably participation of national child-rights CSOs, remains limited in a number of African countries for a variety of reasons.

In addition to the legal and developmental imperative to accelerate social protection on the continent, there is an imperative to accelerate (national) CSO participation in these processes. This requires that all responsible role players, including governments, development agencies, UN agencies, INGOs and national CSOs themselves, take action to address remaining barriers to participation.

Governments are specifically urged to:

- Develop child-sensitive social protection policies and programmes that promote children's developmental outcomes and contribute to fulfilment of their fundamental rights to survival, development and protection. These programmes should be systematized through state institutions and budget processes, with clearly defined goals and clear roles of participating stakeholders to enhance coordination and accountability.

- Adopt clear and institutionalized consultation mechanisms wherein CSOs participate meaningfully in the planning, implementation and monitoring of social protection policies in a continuous and constructive manner. They should also create and resource effective platforms that involve especially marginalised groups, such as children with disabilities.

- Regularly review their legal and policy framework to create an enabling environment for CSO participation. Prohibitive laws and regulations should be revised or repealed to this effect.

Development partners and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) play critical roles in building the capacity of CSOs, particularly in:

Providing support to enable them to play significant roles in developing and implementing child-sensitive social protection programmes. They should play a catalytic role in facilitating sustained, meaningful inclusion of CSOs in promoting social protection agendas, through providing technical and financial resources to establish alliances and other collective structures and enhance coordinated efforts to advance the social protection agenda.

Civil society organisations themselves need to be technically and financially organized to participate along the continuum from policy development through to monitoring the effectiveness of child-sensitive social protection programmes. They must:

- Articulate their work through the strategic identification and alignment of their focus areas within the social protection agenda
- Identify the skills, capacities and resources required to advance CSSP and seek to secure these through partnerships with development agencies, INGOs and other national CSOs
- Organize themselves in alliances and networks that enable them to contribute more effectively and collectively towards national social protection goals
- se these networks to share experiences and resources.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and rationale

Over the past decade, recognition of and commitment to state-led social protection programmes in Africa has become more widespread. This has been driven by two underpinning assumptions: the association between development of human capital and achieving national developmental objectives, and the association between human capital development and the realisation of human rights.

This is significant for many African countries where in the past, greater emphasis has been given to economic development than to human development, and where investments in macroeconomic policies and programmes are given greater consideration than social development policies and programmes. These past practices have contributed to widespread deprivation, poverty, and inequality (African Union: First session of the AU Conference of Ministers in Charge of Social Development, 2008) (African Union, 2006). The collective commitment by African governments to the promotion of social protection as a vehicle for accelerating development and fulfilling obligations to human rights was reaffirmed most recently by the adoption of the Khartoum Declaration on Social Policy Action towards Social Inclusion (2010). As a result, "nearly every country in Africa is now discussing social protection in some form" (Nhongo, in Global Network & Solidar, 2011).

Similarly, social protection as a viable and effective strategy for realizing child rights through child-sensitive social protection (CSSP) policies and programmes is now broadly accepted. The evidence is clear – the developmental returns of social protection are higher when these programmes are designed to address risks and vulnerabilities unique to children. The realisation of higher developmental returns depends on the development of comprehensive multi-sectoral rights-based social protection systems that respect, protect and promote children's rights to — for example — health, education, equality and freedom from discrimination. These are critical to children's survival and development as well as to fulfilment of their full potential (UNICEF, 2012) (ACPF and ODI, 2013).The AU Executive Council recently requested member states to accelerate implementation of the African Union's Social Policy Framework through increased investment and budget allocation to the social sector (AU Commission, 2014). Over the next several decades, governments are likely to accelerate their efforts to institutionalize and expand on existing commitments for social protection. It is imperative that these emerging and expanding social protection systems benefit children and respond effectively to the multidimensional risks and vulnerabilities that affect them.

Achieving the levels of critical engagement necessary to yield responsive child-sensitive policies and programmes requires that governments adopt an inclusive approach to policy development – a principle embedded in, and required by, the African Union's Social Policy Framework (SPF) for Africa. The SPF provides:

> *"…an overarching policy structure to assist AU Member States in the development of their national social policy to promote human empowerment and development in their ongoing quest to address the multiple social issues facing their societies"* (African Union: First session of the AU Conference of Ministers in Charge of Social Development, 2008).

The SPF provides that "Social Policy formulation must include bottom-up approaches to allow the participation of beneficiaries and recipients in decision-making". While it unequivocally places responsibility for the provision of social protection on states, it also expressly requires that governments "should include civil society in policy-making on social protection, and in programme design,

implementation, monitoring and impact evaluation". Civil society is mandated to play an active advocacy role in implementing the SPF, including around fulfilment of the state's duties; analysing and sharing relevant information with the AU and member states; working in collaboration with the AU and member states to promote and implement the SPF; and facilitating community-based dialogue on the SPF and regularly informing the government of community perspectives and concerns.

Therefore, civil society is well-placed, and obliged, to ensure that the requisite child-sensitive perspective is considered in the design, delivery and evaluation of social protection policies, programmes, budgets and institutional arrangements. It is the role of civil society to use a CSSP normative framework to interrogate and assess, and advocate for better realisation of, the potential of national policies and resources to advance the objectives of CSSP (Roelen & Sabates-Wheeler, 2012). It is the duty of governments to ensure that civil society, notably those bodies within civil society representative of or with an interest in advancing children's rights, is routinely able to do so through policy development processes that ensure its meaningful inclusion (African Union: First session of the AU Conference of Ministers in Charge of Social Development, 2008).

The engagement of CSOs in social protection does to a large extent depend on states and their development partners' willingness. In order to 'openup' policy-development to CSOs, the creation of platforms and participatory processes capable of facilitating meaningful participation is required, as is the provision of technical and financial resources to enable CSOs to take advantage of the invited dialogue spaces. It further requires CSOs to organize themselves and participate — in both invited *and* claimed spaces — to ensure that the appropriate critical perspective is articulated, to ensure social protection policies are child-sensitive.

1.2 Purpose of the paper

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the legal and developmental rationale for civil society's involvement in the design and implementation of child-sensitive social protection (CSSP). It also aims to present an analytical overview of the role that CSOs have played and are currently playing—and could potentially play — by referring to practical case studies in which CSOs have sought to advance CSSP in Africa. Drawing on the lessons identified by these initiatives, the paper aims to identify the opportunities and challenges CSOs confront, and how these have been addressed through innovative responses and the establishment of mechanisms to facilitate improved participation and advocacy (Coalition on Civil Society Resourcing, 2013).

1.3 Methodology and limitations

The paper is based on a review of literature and an analysis of the developmental and legal context of CSSP and the role of civil society in fostering stronger social protection policy and programme development in Africa. The review included literature on civil society's role in development, as well as its broader role in socio-economic development endeavours, specifically social protection.

Given that the contributions of CSOs to social protection are largely documented in the grey literature, which is not necessarily always accessible, accessing concrete evidence was challenging. Yet the limited available documents highlighted the role that CSOs are playing and could play in promoting child-sensitive social protection. This indicates that there may be scope for more in-depth research and systematic analysis to inform the further evolution of the role of CSOs in social protection programmes that benefit children.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

2.1 What is child-sensitive social protection? A normative framework for the development of social protection

Child-sensitive social protection is "inherently a rights-based approach, premised on fundamental principles of universality, accountability, non-discrimination and participation" (ACPF and ODI, 2013). Access to relevant social protection is a right in and of itself and State Parties are obliged, under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), to make CSSP universally available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable (Sepulveda & Nyst, 2012).

The question of what services should be publicly provided to meet the CSSP imperative is best answered within the context of the broader definition of social protection. Social protection refers to interventions by public, private and voluntary organisations and informal networks designed to support communities, households and individuals in efforts to prevent, manage and overcome risks and vulnerabilities (Handa et al. (Eds.) 2012 in (ACPF and ODI, 2013). Child-sensitive social protection refers to social protection measures that:

> "[aim] to improve opportunities and development outcomes for children through a multidimensional understanding of their wellbeing, with sensitivity to the manner in which risks facing children differ from those facing adults and those in distinct stages of child and adolescent development." (ACPF and ODI, 2013)

It embraces a range of policies and programmes that compensate for the "inherent social disadvantages, risks and vulnerabilities children may be born into, as well as those acquired later in childhood due to external shocks" (DFID, HelpAge International, Hope and Homes for Children, Institute of Development Studies, International Labour Organisation, Overseas Development Institute, Save the Children UK, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank, June 2009).

CSSP is not limited to measures that target children directly. It "includes the households, communities and individual caregivers who play critical roles in determining children's socio-economic vulnerability" (ACPF and ODI, 2013). It is also not limited to cash transfers, but comprises a comprehensive set of interventions that are:

- **Protective**, in the safeguarding of household income;
- **Preventive**, in the provision to households of alternatives to potentially negative coping strategies such as dropping out of school, child labour or inadequate adult care;
- **Promotive** of children's development through enabling investments in children's development, including schooling, health, and protection from violence, abuse and neglect;
- **Transformative** through measures aimed at addressing inequities and imbalances that create or sustain child vulnerabilities (ACPF and ODI, 2013).The transformative imperative requires the development of measures that address "the various layers of child vulnerability and deprivation [not only] on the economic level, but also[through] legislation [to change] socio-cultural attitudes, gender relations and structures which maintain children in positions of vulnerability" (Children Affected by HIV/AIDS Working Group & Better Care Network, Netherlands, June 2012).

CSSP interventions are provided through a range of "often-overlapping formal and informal programmes and initiatives", including:

- **Social transfers** aimed at relieving the worst aspects of poverty while also increasing access to basic services such as health care and nutrition, water and sanitation, and education. Mechanisms include regular cash or in-kind transfers, school fee waivers and scholarships, health service fee waivers, and school feeding programmes (ACPF and ODI, 2013) (DFID, HelpAge International, Hope and Homes for Children, Institute of Development Studies, International Labour Organisation, Overseas Development Institute, Save the Children UK, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank, June 2009).
- **Social services**, including "family and community services to support families and promote youth and adult employment; alternative care for children outside family environments; additional support to include vulnerable or excluded children in education; and social welfare services including family support, child protection services and assistance in accessing other services and entitlements" (DFID, HelpAge International, Hope and Homes for Children, Institute of Development Studies, International Labour Organisation, Overseas Development Institute, Save the Children UK, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank, June 2009).
- **Policies, legislation and regulations** that ensure access to resources and promote childcare and access to basic social services for especially vulnerable families (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013).

Thus CSSP services and support may be provided through a range of policies and programmes within a diversity of sectors, including poverty alleviation, community development, social assistance, basic services, nutrition, health, education and early childhood development.

The legal underpinning of CSSP relates not only to its content, but also to institutional arrangements and resources. In addition to having to ensure the universal availability and accessibility of services for marginalised children, states are obliged to:

- Ensure their sustainable, progressive and reliable financing within national annual budgets
- Develop mechanisms to prevent fragmentation and ensure coordination across a diverse array of sectors to secure a comprehensive and complementary suite of services
- Build the capacity of all implementing stakeholders (Sepulveda & Nyst, 2012) (UNICEF, 2012) (UNICEF and World Bank, 2013).

Detailed discussions on institutional and financing aspects of child-sensitive social protection are presented in one of the other background papers prepared for the 6th IPC, entitled *Sustainable institutional arrangements for social protection programmes that benefit children*.

The preceding requirements provide the normative framework against which all state-led social protection systems —along with their concomitant policies, programmes, budgets, institutional arrangements and development processes —ought to be benchmarked to ensure a CSSP system. The main question now is: **what is it that the CSOs could contribute towards the effectiveness and sustainability of child-sensitive social protection programmes?**

2.2 What or who are civil society organisations?

There are multiple definitions of what 'civil society' means. The World Bank defines it as:

> *...a wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations* (World Bank).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines 'civil society' as non-state, not-for-profit, voluntary organisations formed by people in the 'social space' between the family and the state, excluding political parties and firms. It refers to a wide range of organisations that seek to influence the policy of governments and international organisations and/or to complement government services (such as health and education).

A distinction is drawn between international and national CSOs. International CSOs include, for example, Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision, Oxfam and *Médecins Sans Frontières*, and are often referred to as international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). National CSOs include a wide range of indigenous structures, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs),smaller community-based organisations or CBOs (which aim to mobilise, organize or empower their members, usually in a local area), faith based organisations, social movements, women's groups, advocacy groups, social networks, think-tanks and research institutions, organized labour groups such as trade unions and numerous other associations (World Health Organisation) (UNICEF, 2003). In addition, there are UN agencies such as UNICEF which, although governed by an executive board made up of UN member states, regard themselves as "both a participant in, and a witness to, an increasingly global civil society." (United Nations, 2014). UNICEF often partners with CSOs in the development and delivery of the government programmes it supports, as a key strategy towards attainment of its objective of realising children's rights (UNICEF, 2003).

The number of national CSOs in Africa has surged over the last decade. There is great diversity across and within countries in terms of their size, interests, roles played, and level of organisational sophistication and formality. The differences are determined by a range of factors, including the state of development of their home country, whether the country is in a state of conflict or not, the nature of government, and the characteristic relationship between government and civil society.

2.3 Why should civil society be part of child-sensitive social protection programmes?

The rationale for civil society's involvement in social protection is linked to the development paradigm informing the SPF, advocated by UN agencies and other leading development partners, and which is increasingly adopted by African countries. This paradigm places human, rather than economic, development at the centre, and sees civil society as a legitimate role-player in securing effective, rights-based and participatory CSSP.

WHO explains the dual developmental and legal rationale as follows:

> *The growing role of civil society in development processes is not simply a response to political lobbies or to an increased scale of organization; rather a shift in the understanding of development processes. When people and human dimensions are defined as the core of development, then social exclusion itself becomes a facet of under-development and social networking. Under these terms, the fulfilment of human development will require concerted efforts of the State together with citizens and their organizations. As there has been a shift towards a more rights-based approach to development, more prominence has been given to civil society roles in raising, advancing and claiming the entitlements of different social groups. This gives CSOs a vital role as collaborators, catalysts and watchdogs of development policies and their effective implementation* (World Health Organization, December 2001)*.

Over and above the legal and ideological rationale, it is widely recognised that the active participation of civil society is likely to result in sustainable and effective social protection programmes responsive to local contexts and needs. Devereux and White observe that:

"...initiatives that evolve out of (or are adapted to) domestic political agendas and [which] respond to local conceptualizations and prioritizations of need are more likely to succeed – in terms of their coverage, fiscal sustainability, political institutionalization, and impacts – than those that are based on imported 'projectized' models" (International Food Policy Research Institute. West and Central Africa office, 2012)*.

Civil society, particularly national CSOs, is uniquely placed and mandated in terms of international and continental child rights instruments, to provide a local contextual perspective and facilitate state adoption of CSSP-compliant policies and programmes. A distinction is thus drawn for the purpose of this paper, based on the underlying rationale for CSO involvement, between the role played by national CSOs and that of INGOs and UN agencies. The assumption is that the former are better placed than the latter, to provide local contextual experience, represent the voice of affected beneficiaries, and national CSOs are more sustainable and long-term and should therefore be central to shaping domestic social protection policies.

2.4 Challenges to the adoption of CSSP in Africa

The adoption of the African Union's Social Policy Framework in 2009 marked an important milestone. It led to the development of a number of national social protection policies and programmes, albeit on a relatively small scale. In 2009, Devereux *et al* observed that the realisation of the SPF vision required that the predominantly social transfer pilot projects "transition from small scale donor-driven initiatives to universal, scaled up, publicly resourced state-driven programmes" (Devereux & Cipryk, 2009). More recently, participants at the joint 2014 Africa Union and UNICEF Experts Consultation Meeting on Children and Social Protection Systems in Africa noted progress, with a number of countries having adopted government-led social protection policies and programmes. Participants also noted, however, that in 2014 the challenges for many countries remain scale, universal access, and effective administration of national policies and programmes (AU; RSA; UNICEF, 2014). For other nations that have not yet embarked on the journey the challenge is more fundamental, with policies and programmes yet to be developed.

The attainment of CSSP goals and objectives is hampered by the reluctance of a number of states to invest the requisite public funds to ensure universal and comprehensive social protection programmes; to systematise their development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation within government systems; and to design policies so as to maximise their impact on the protection, promotion and realisation of children's rights, survival and development to their full potential (Centre for Social Protection, Institute for Development Studies, ODI, rhvp, DEV, 2010) (AU Commission, 2014). There are several African countries in which programmes have been scaled up and are now wholly state-led and funded. These programmes include South Africa's children's grants and public works programmes, Mozambique's Food Subsidy Programme, Botswana's Old Age Pension and Destitute Support, Lesotho's Old Age pension, and Zambia's Public Welfare Assistance Scheme (Devereux & Cipryk, 2009). For a number of these, the challenge is to rectify inclusion and exclusion errors that result in the most marginalised children remaining outside the safety net. For example, in South Africa an estimated two million eligible children do not access the Child Support Grant (CSG) (SASSA and UNICEF, 2013).

It is therefore apparent that countries find themselves at different stages of compliance with their duty to develop, fund and implement universal child-sensitive social protection programmes. However, whether at an initial pilot stage, at the stage of scaling up and transitioning to government-led policies and programmes, or whether seeking to correct inclusion and exclusion errors, almost all countries need to accelerate efforts to fulfil their commitments to children.

A number of common constraints continue to impede the necessary developments and scaling up, including:

- **Fiscal constraints:** These are an oft-cited reasons for policy inaction (AU; RSA; UNICEF, 2014). Across the continent there are major gaps in financing and budgetary support for social protection programmes, restricting their scale and reach. Fiscal constraints are aggravated by a reluctance to commit to long-term publicly-funded social protection programmes (ACPF and ODI, 2013). Many governments in Africa are not entirely convinced, despite volumes of research to the contrary, of the developmental returns of social protection, and remain anxious that social protection will engender dependency (Centre for Social Protection, Institute for Development Studies, ODI, rhvp, DEV, 2010). It is particularly noteworthy in this context that Ministries of Finance and Planning are key decision-makers about the level of investment and the scale and scope of social protection (Centre for Social Protection, Institute for Development Studies, ODI, rhvp, DEV, 2010). They are often motivated by economic rather than legal arguments, which may lead to programmes being deficient in terms of scale, equity and content (Hevia, 2014).

- **Insufficient integration:** the inadequacy and slow pace of integration of social protection within government systems contribute to fragmentation and limited impact, low administrative capacity and delivery leaks, and poor systems to coordinate, implement and monitor effectiveness of policies and programmes (AU; RSA; UNICEF, 2014) (ACPF and ODI, 2013).

- **Inappropriate design of social protection programmes:** perceived fiscal and ideological limits contribute to inadequate or inappropriate targeting, content, quantity and quality of interventions to secure children's wellbeing. This tends to give rise to ineffective programmes that lack internal political traction, are unsustainable, and may exclude beneficiaries in need (Centre for Social Protection, Institute for Development Studies, ODI, rhvp, DEV, 2010) (AU; RSA; UNICEF, 2014).

2.5 What is required to overcome impediments to developing CSSP?

Further efforts are required to overcome these challenges, including:

- Political will to increase public investments in CSSP
- Strengthened synergy of social policies and their harmonised implementation across sectors
- Strengthened accountability mechanisms to ensure fulfilment of states' CSSP responsibilities.

Lessons from social protection development processes in developing countries indicate that a key element for overcoming impediments and securing the ingredients for strong CSSP is the active involvement of CSOs (particularly national CSOs) in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of social protection policies and programmes. Notably, promoting child-sensitive social protection requires CSOs' meaningful engagement in "agenda-setting, decision-making and structures to hold governments accountable" (VeneKlasen, Miller, Clark, & Reilly, 2004).

Historically, civil society in Africa has not participated meaningfully in national social protection policy development processes (ACPF and ODI, 2013) (Barrett, 2013). All of the identified challenges point to a limitation in the ability of policy development processes to consult and engage with the communities they are intended to benefit —which is contrary to the "principles of participation that have become widely accepted and well-established in most development programming" (Centre for Social Protection, Institute for Development Studies, ODI, rhvp, DEV, 2010).

3. THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN CHILD-SENSITIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION INITIATIVES

This section of the paper reviews the extent to which CSOs have, in recent years, made progress towards improved levels of participation and contribution in national social protection policy and programmes. The review aims to highlight the different forms of participation and opportunities for inclusive processes as well as some of the challenges and limitations facing current practices.

3.1 Three case studies: South Africa, Uganda and Ghana

Across Africa CSOs are increasingly engaging in social protection policy dialogue with varying degrees of inclusiveness and impact on the emerging national CSSP policies and programmes. The following three case studies from South Africa, Uganda and Ghana illustrate the different modalities of participation; the impact on the emerging CSSP agenda; and the challenges that CSOs face in their roles towards contributing to social protection.

3.1.1 Case study: the role of CSOs in strengthening CSSP in South Africa

South Africa's well-developed social protection framework makes provision for a number of social services that benefit children in vulnerable circumstances both directly and indirectly. The CSSP framework is in essence rights-based: it is embedded within and guaranteed by a number of international, regional and national instruments in terms of which the Government of the Republic of South Africa (GRSA) has undertaken to secure children's rights and development through comprehensive social protection measures. These include the CRC, the ACRWC, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), and most recently, the National Development Plan entitled *Vision 2030 – Our Future - Make it Work*.

South Africa has sought to fulfil its CSSP responsibilities through the provision of a range of legislatively regulated and publicly financed services and support, including:

- A number of cash transfers that directly benefit children living in poverty: the Child Support Grant (CSG); the Care Dependency Grant (CDG) for those with disabilities and those without parental care; and the Foster Child Grant (FCG). In addition there are grants that benefit children indirectly, such as the Old Age Grant (OAG).
- Free health care for children under the age of six and children living in poverty.
- Targeted health care services for especially vulnerable children, such as prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) services to prevent the infection of infants and treat infected children as early as possible.
- Free and/or subsidised basic services such as water, sanitation and energy for households living in poverty.
- A combination of free and subsidised schooling, from early childhood through to secondary education, for children living in poverty.
- A school-feeding programme.
- A comprehensive child protection system that makes provision for preventative and therapeutic services, with a statutory duty in terms of the Children's Act no 38 of 2005 to prioritise vulnerable children living in poverty, affected by chronic illnesses such as HIV and AIDS, and living in rural areas.

- A number of programmes for especially vulnerable children, enshrined in policies such as the National Action Plan for Orphans and Other Children Made Vulnerable by HIV and AIDS 2009–2012 and the national Strategic Plan on HIV, STIs and TB 2012–2016.

South Africa has a large and active group of (national) CSOs that has capitalised on the enabling legal environment to engage robustly in social protection policy development processes, significantly strengthening the governing CSSP framework. In 2014, there are more than 120,000 registered non-profit organisations in South Africa, almost half of which are less formalised community-based organisations (CBOs) (The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2014). These fulfil numerous functions, including service provision; giving voice to marginalised groups; lobbying for change; and holding government to account for its Constitutional obligations (Coalition on Civil Society Resourcing, 2013). CSOs have played an active role in both invited and claimed spaces[1] to strengthen not only the many child sensitive social protection policies and programmes in place, but also the strong legal foundation upon which these rest – that is, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

Skelton (2009) and Proudlock (2009) attribute the strong and expansive protection of children's socio-economic rights in the Constitution to effective CSO advocacy, specifically advocacy undertaken by child rights organisations (Skelton, 2009) (Proudlock P. , 2009). The initial post-apartheid Interim Constitution included only one line on children's rights; it provided for 'the right of children not to be subject to neglect, abuse or forced labour'. The final Constitutional provisions are significantly wider, and guarantee children's rights to basic nutrition, health care services, social security and shelter. This was largely as a result of children's rights organisations who consistently responded to the calls for written and oral submissions during the Constitutional Assembly process that culminated in the final Constitution (Skelton, 2009). Once the Constitution was in place, civil society continued to play an active role in ensuring that government fully respected, protected and promoted children's social protection rights. It played this role in invited spaces through parliamentary and committee processes, as well as through claimed spaces via litigation, petitions and budget monitoring and commentary. The children's sector collectively engaged with three broad sectoral policy development processes (described below) that have formed the bedrock of the South African CSSP framework.

In 2000, the children's sector established an alliance structure called ACESS (Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security), at a national conference convened with the specific objective of critically engaging in the national social security review process initiated by the GRSA. The conference was convened by leading child rights CSOs and was attended by a range of CSOs, including CBOs, research institutes, national NGOs and faith-based organisations. The conference delegates formulated the need for the alliance and its advocacy role, and selected, from among the CSO ranks present, three national child rights organisations to steer the process. Through a democratic election the initial steering committee was subsequently augmented with further CSO representatives, including from grassroots CBOs and FBOs, to constitute the alliance governing board. The objective of the alliance was to ensure through collective action that children were adequately protected in emerging social protection policies. Through the collective advocacy efforts of its membership of approximately 1,500 organisations, substantial policy gains were made. The timing of the formation of the alliance coincided with the government's initiation of a national social security review process. ACESS drew together the voices of a diverse range of CSOs within the

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[1]   Invited spaces include public discussion or policy making processes to which civil society groups are invited by powerful state and international actors that control the agenda and rules of engagement. In contrast, claimed spaces are created by civil society organizations, and are spaces where the agenda and terms of debate and participation with state and international actors are defined by citizen's groups (VeneKlasen, Miller, Clark, & Reilly, 2004).

policy-making process, from community organisations to formal NGO and research institutes. It facilitated documentation of the experiences of its grassroots members in need of social assistance and the collection of evidence through a targeted research agenda undertaken by its larger academic affiliates. This collection of information provided the foundation fora multi-strategy campaign using the media, mass mobilisation, party-political entry points such as ANC party conferences and the ANC Women's League, formal parliamentary processes around legislative deliberations, and the courts. Among other things, the campaign advocated successfully for:

1. The extension of the Child Support Grant (CSG) for children up to the age of 18 years
2. An upward revision of the means test determining eligibility for the CSG
3. A revision of the documentation requirements for accessing the CSG to ensure the inclusion of children lacking birth certificates
4. Strengthened administrative procedures within the Department of Home Affairs and more effective partnerships with the national social security agency, enabling vulnerable children to access documents (Budlender, Proudlock, & Jamieson, 2008).

CSOs have also worked collectively through the Children's Bill Working Group to strengthen the protection of children. The group was established under the coordination of two leading children's rights organisations, the Children's Institute (which engages in child rights research and advocacy) and Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (RAPCAN — a leading child rights advocacy organisation). It comprised 45 CSOs representing the children's sector, as well as representatives of marginalised groups often excluded from the process, such as those with disabilities and refugees. The group's methodology was:

> "...built around research, consultation, and dialogue with organisations on the ground ... [and] the details of the advocacy methodology were continuously adapted as new challenges emerged and the political landscape shifted."

Advocacy engagements included submissions to the Department of Social Development on earlier drafts of the Bill, as well as written and oral submissions to Parliament by CSOs, individuals and children themselves. What is particularly noteworthy is that the expertise, depth of insight and cross-sectoral makeup of the group placed it in a particularly strong position in relation to Parliament. The group's persistent engagement with parliamentarians and the high quality of their inputs resulted in parliamentarians holding them in high regard and using group members to advise and support them in their understanding and shaping of the emerging Children's Bill (Budlender, Proudlock, & Jamieson, 2008).

CSOs have mobilised under the banner of the Yezingane Children's Network to ensure effective representation of the children's sector within the South African National AIDS council (SANAC). SANAC is:

> "...a voluntary association of institutions established by the national cabinet of the South African Government to build consensus across government, civil society and all other stakeholders to drive an enhanced country response to the scourges of HIV, TB and STIs" (SANAC, 2014).

The Network facilitates inclusive development of policies to address the impact of HIV and AIDS on children, families and communities in South Africa. Its membership extends from grassroots organisations to international CSOs. It describes itself as having a strong monitoring and advocacy function, and "facilitates the Children's Sector participation in SANAC and related initiatives such as the National Strategic Plan (NSP) 2012 -2 016 for South Africa's response to HIV, TB and STIs" (SANAC, 2014).

One example of such CSO mobilisation is the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) franchised model of service delivery, under which partnering NGOs are contracted, strengthened and supported to provide preventative and statutory protection, care and support for vulnerable and at-risk children, youth and families. The programme recruits local unemployed community members who are screened, trained and deployed as child and youth care workers servicing families in their own communities. The model was designed by the NACCW but has since been adopted and scaled up by the Department of Social Development, which has recognised the value of the programme to augment its limited reach in marginalised areas, largely by providing a sufficiency of social workers. Public funding is provided to the departments in provinces in order to finance the programme. It is currently implemented in over 55 sites in eight provinces by more than 40 CSO partner organizations. Once it is scaled up, the goal is for 10,000 trained child and youth care workers to be deployed in 400 *Isibindi* projects countrywide (NACCW, 2013).

The programme not only benefits government, but it also benefits partnering CSOs.

> *"Organizations are assisted to grow and access further resources; communities are strengthened through the injection of skills and resources; and workers are set on a career path in a recognized profession. But the ultimate beneficiaries … are desperate children and families who would not otherwise have had access to formal care and assistance"* (NACCW, 2013).

A further example of CSOs supporting CSSP implementation is the Child Advocacy Project (CAP) in Kwazulu Natal. Participating CSOs not only support implementation of child protection social services, but also use their service delivery experience as an entry-point for community-informed advocacy to address poor access to the relevant services. The CAP project works within the existing child protection framework. It identifies children at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation, and supports them and their families in learning and accessing their rights in relation to health, housing and welfare. The project not only supports children in accessing their benefits, but it also seeks to identify service delivery bottlenecks and feed this information into the policy development cycle to improve outcomes for affected children. Information and advocacy is founded on community engagement strategies, thus empowering communities and local stakeholders to drive change at a systemic level (Child Advocacy Project, 2009).

CSOs regularly undertake research on the pathways and causes of vulnerability with a view to informing the development of appropriately responsive social protection policies. For example, RIATT-ESA commissioned a study in South Africa to determine the pathways between parental AIDS-related illness and negative impacts on children in order to support the identification of "important targets for interventions" (Cluver, Orkin, Boyes, Sherr, Makhasi, & Nikelo, 2013). The study found that parental illness and/or death from AIDS increases the likelihood of parental disability, poverty, community violence, stigma and child abuse, all of which in turn negatively impact children, thereby highlighting the fact that protective interventions should target these pathways.

CSO-led budget analysis and advocacy has been used successfully to expand policies and increase allocations for prevention of mother-to-child transmission programmes as well as the extension of the CSG. In 2000, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) launched a successful case against the government compelling it to make Nevirapine available to all HIV-positive women in public health facilities in order to strengthen PMTCT. Central to the TAC's argument was the assertion, based on economic and budgetary analysis, that the government's refusal to implement the programme on grounds of cost was untenable. A series of affidavits were drawn up, including one from health economist Professor Nocili Nattrass, who showed that the investment of public funds on a PMTCT programme would actually save US$90,000 per year by reducing future HIV infections (Overy, 2011).

Similarly, budget analysis and advocacy was central to civil society's campaign for the extension of the upper age limit for the CSG to 18, increases in the monthly value of the grant, and the upward adjustment of the means test. Technically sound budget analysis was used to convince treasury and politicians of the investment value of an expanded grant. This paved the way for the final adoption of the extended policies.

> *"The budget-related research included calculations that showed that the value of the grant decreased in real terms (after adjusting for inflation) in the first years ... [and] estimated the budget that would be needed for the age group to be increased and the means test changed to make more children eligible." (Overy, 2012)*

Factors enabling CSO participation in strengthening CSSP

A number of factors enabled robust and effective engagement by CSOs in the social protection arena in South Africa. These included:

- **The enabling legal environment:** South Africa's legal framework, with the current Non-Profit Organisation Act, creates an enabling environment for CSOs. The Act is far less onerous than the previous Fundraising Act of 1978 which was used by the apartheid government to suppress the activities of some organisations (The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2014).In addition, South Africa is one of a few countries that expressly recognises and protects the rights of children to participate in the making of decisions in the home, school and community, or by government, which concern a child or children in general. The right is protected by, among other instruments, the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005.

- **Systemically inclusive and participatory processes:** the South African Government has developed and institutionalized routine inclusive participatory processes that allow for meaningful participation in the construction of the social protection agenda in invited spaces. South Africa's policies and laws are generally developed through consultative processes. For example, the Children's Act went through extensive consultative processes with a range of CSOs ranging from research institutions and large NGOs to caregivers and children at a community level. The resultant documentation, which included an issue paper, several research papers, a discussion paper, a report and a draft bill, were all made available to the public for commentary, and several consultative workshops were arranged by the South African Law Reform Commission. The subsequent parliamentary phase included numerous calls for submissions that were taken up by 30 CSO organisations working on children's issues of which two were child-led groups (Budlender, Proudlock, & Jamieson, 2008). Another example of a systemic inclusive social protection policy development is found in the processes undertaken in the development of *South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP): An inclusive and collaborative shared development plan for the future.* This reflects a shift in South Africa's development paradigm from one that is state-dominated (with civil society relegated to the margins) to a situation where the National Planning Commission (NPC) is expressly mandated to adopt an inclusive and participatory approach to the development of the national developmental vision and priorities for South Africa. The Commission used a range of participatory strategies to reach all South Africans, including hard-to-reach stakeholders. Special processes were designed to reach children and youth and geographically marginalised communities. The initial plan was then amended to include social protection, among other issues (National Planning Commission, RSA, 2013).

- **Sound legal underpinnings of social protection:** the relationship between a solid rights-based legal foundation and the ability of CSOs to hold governments to account is strengthened considerably

where international obligations are domesticated in national constitutions and laws (Proudlock P. , 2010). The fact that South Africa's Constitution and laws such as the Social Assistance Act enshrine and protect the right of children to social protection and associated services and benefits (which, unlike the rights of adults, are not made subject to progressive realisation) has provided an enabling framework for successful litigation by CSOs such as TAC and ACESS to compel expanded social protection laws (Devereux & Cipryk, 2009).

- **Collective action:** the majority of the successful campaigns in South Africa were driven by CSO collectives rather than single organisations. Clearly, the ability of CSOs to organize themselves into collectives, and the support provided by donors and development partners to facilitate coordinated and organized action, has served CSO engagement in policy development processes well.

- **A diversity of skills, capacities and interests:** related to the previous point is the further observation that by working collectively through structures that bring together grassroots voices and technical research, budget analysis, advocacy and communications skills, CSOs in South Africa have been able to harness a powerful combination of political weight and sound evidence. It has been hard for decision-makers on political, legal and developmental fronts to disregard the collective voice and its relevant demands (Overy, 2011) (Budlender, Proudlock, & Jamieson, 2008).

- **Willingness to be flexible and adopt diverse strategies:** successful CSOs such as TAC and ACESS have exhibited a level of flexibility that has seen them working both with and against government, in invited and claimed spaces, to advance their positions (Overy, 2011) (Budlender, Proudlock, & Jamieson, 2008).

Challenges to inclusive CSSP development in South Africa

A number of challenges have been experienced in South Africa. These include:

- **The Protection of State Information Bill:** while the South African legal environment is generally enabling for CSOs, the recent Protection of State Information Bill of 2010 (which is yet to be signed into law) does potentially impact the freedom of CSOs to access and share information about children's rights, especially with respect to crime statistics and the rights of children in detention (Parliamentary Programme of the Community Law Centre, University of Western Cape & Carol Bower (Ed), 2014).

- **Resource constraints:** successful coordination and advocacy requires money. For example, the Children's Bill working group cost more than R 1 million per year, over and above the hidden costs associated with the presence of staff members from the participating organisations (Budlender, Proudlock, & Jamieson, 2008). The advocacy role of CSOs in South Africa is increasingly limited by their lack of access to advocacy funding. As South Africa is a middle-income country, some international development partners that previously supported advocacy campaigns have now withdrawn from the country. As a result, many CSO's are dependent on government resources that do not cover advocacy activities. In addition, CSOs dependent on government resources are disinclined to take on an active advocacy role that may be seen to place them in opposition to the government's position on policies and laws. As a result there has been a steady decline in the number of CSOs pursuing campaigns for the benefit of children in South Africa (Parliamentary Programme of the Community Law Centre, University of Western Cape & Carol Bower (Ed), 2014).

- **Insufficient systematic children's participation:** while children's right to participation enjoys legal protection, the GRSA has not taken adequate steps or allocated sufficient resources to ensure their

routine and systemic participation in policy development processes; processes often exclude the most marginalised and vulnerable children such as pre-teens, children in rural areas and children with disabilities. Where children have participated, their views are often not taken into account in the final shape of the relevant policies and laws (PAN: Children, 2012).

3.1.2 Case study: the role of CSOs in strengthening CSSP in Uganda

Poverty is widespread in Uganda, with children experiencing higher levels of deprivation across multiple indices. Notably affected are those in rural areas, those in female-headed households, and those who have been orphaned (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2012). In 2009, almost 30 per cent of children lived in households with an aggregate consumption level below the poverty line – almost five percentage points higher than the adult poverty rate. The rate is higher in the Northern region, where almost 51 per cent of children live in poverty (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2012).About 2.1million children are in the care of elderly caregivers (i.e. those over the age of 60 years). Child labour is widely practiced: in 2009/10, 27 per cent of boys and 24 per cent of girls aged 5–17 were engaged in child labour. Large numbers of children are adversely affected by HIV and AIDS, which account for 500,000 orphans. 12 per cent of the estimated 915,000 people who are HIV-positive are aged 15 years or younger (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2012).

The Government of Uganda's social protection framework recognises orphans and other vulnerable children as one of a number of vulnerable groups meriting social protection — which is defined in the National Development Plan (2010–2014) as:

> *"…all public and private interventions that address vulnerabilities associated with being or becoming poor… [they] include social assistance to the chronically poor; [and] care for the elderly, orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC)."*

The current social protection framework also makes provision for a number of interventions that benefit children directly or indirectly (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2012). These include:

- The Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) programme. This is a pilot non-contributory cash transfer scheme targeting the poorest 10 per cent of households in Uganda. It is primarily funded by international development partners. It provides two cash transfers, both of which benefit children. These are *The Vulnerable Family Grants (VGS)*and *The Senior Citizens Grants (SCG)*.

- The SAGE programme is complemented with a number of public works programmes targeted at poor households.

- In addition there are various policies and laws governing child health and nutrition and child protection, such as the Children's Act and the Domestic Violence Act.

- Social care services are available for vulnerable children, including the resettlement of street children and community-based rehabilitation for children with disabilities.

- In the education sphere, Uganda has abolished public primary school fees in public schools and provides food rations to encourage Early Childhood Development (ECD) uptake.

The social protection challenges in Uganda

While there has been increased political interest and investment of funds in social protection in Uganda, these are not necessarily impacting positively on children, because of the following constraints:

- **Limited reach of the cash transfer programme:** the current reach of the SAGE programme (10 per cent of the population) is wholly inadequate. Almost half the Ugandan population requires some form of help from the government as a result of often overlapping vulnerabilities such as poverty, disability, and HIV and AIDS (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2012).

- **Limited investment in social protection:** the scale of need is out of proportion to current levels of public expenditure on social protection. Public spending on social protection has remained at less than one per cent of the national budget, with the majority of funding coming from international development partners (Barrett, 2013) (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2012) (Irene, 2011).

- **Limited capacity:** there is limited capacity and infrastructure to deliver social protection services and there is limited involvement of NGOs and CSOs in delivery of social protection programmes outside of hospital, health care and provision of social support to those suffering from HIV/AIDS (Onapa, 2011) (Barrett, 2013).

- **Fragmentation across the sectors:** there is little mutual appreciation and/or synergy among sub-sectors (health and education, for example) of their mutual roles and relationships in the context of securing comprehensive social protection for children (Onapa, 2011) (Irene, 2011) (The Republic of Uganda, May 2013).

Barrett identifies a number of challenges to the required further expansion of social protection. He also identifies requisite solutions, the majority of which require active CSO engagement in policy dialogue processes. He notes that:

- The public policy agenda is shaped by attitudes and ideologies that marginalize rights-based social protection from the national development discourse. These include a preoccupation with the growth agenda as well as a fear of dependency set against competing and contested definitions of social protection.

- Political challenges, including political conflict and the resultant negative impact on public financial management; policy paralysis; limited sensitivity to social policies in political discourse; and the centralization of political decision-making.

- Institutional weaknesses, including the lack of an institutional home for social policy, the political and credibility weakness of the lead Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, and the absence of the state at local level —all of which contribute to limiting social protection growth (Barrett, 2013).

- Addressing these challenges requires focused, bottom-up advocacy in order to advance a shared national vision of social protection. This in turn requires CSO advocacy in the social protection arena.

As in other African countries, there has been substantial growth in the number and activities of CSOs in Uganda. Between 1986 and 2012, the number of registered NGOs grew from 160 to almost 10,000 (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013) (USAID Uganda, 2011). CSOs work across a range of thematic areas of relevance to child-sensitive social protection, including children's rights, health, education, gender

equality, HIV and AIDS, and social security. There is a comparatively large number of CSOs working in HIV and AIDS, as a result of the attention paid to the pandemic in Uganda and the influence of donors (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013).

Historically, CSOs have predominantly focused their work on implementation and service delivery, and much less so on advocacy (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013). This pattern now appears to be changing. The growth in the number of CSOs has also been accompanied by an expanding CSO advocacy role (USAID Uganda, 2011). Today there are a number of organisations that engage in advocacy for policy reform to benefit children, mobilizing communities, and monitoring the resourcing and implementation of social protection policies and programmes. Unlike in South Africa, the active organisations are not necessarily from the child rights sector. They include organisations working on issues related to corruption (for example, the Anti-Corruption Coalition in Uganda); gender (such as the Domestic Relations Bill advocacy campaign); disability; food and nutrition (such as the SUN coalition discussed in more detail later in this section of the report); sexual and reproductive health and education; and older people (Devlin-Foltz & Ssewakiryanga) (USAID Uganda, 2011) (Uganda Social Protection Platform; Uganda Reach the Aged Association; National Network for Older Persons of Uganda, 2014).

Based on the available literature, there are not many Ugandan organisations with a child-rights mandate pursuing a CSSP agenda. One existing example is the Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN), a coalition of child-focused organizations including community-based, national and international organizations working for the welfare and the rights of children in Uganda. Since its establishment in 1997UCRNN has been at the forefront of monitoring the implementation of and adherence to child rights instruments at national, regional and international level. It coordinates platforms for CSO contributions to national development plans, and engages in discussions and debates regarding national budget and sectoral policies and strategies, all of which have implications for child-sensitive social protection (UCRNN, 2014).UCRNN also assesses the extent to which national budgets provide resources essential for the survival, development and protection of children, and advocates for budget increases and efficient utilisation of resources for better child outcomes. Despite its clear child rights and poverty-alleviation mandate, as well as its representation on Uganda's Social Protection Platform (discussed later), the UCRNN does not necessarily actively pursue a social protection agenda.

Under the leadership of Government, UNICEF Uganda appears to be the lead driver of the CSSP agenda. UNICEF Uganda reports that it has been working with Government and other partners, including child rights organisations, to ensure that the country's social protection framework is child-sensitive. It is also the Chair of the Local Development Partners' Taskforce on social protection. Thus, although UNICEF appears to be a lead organisation in this regard, its methodology includes the participation of CSOs in the child rights sector (UNICEF Uganda, 2012). Unfortunately, the available documentation does not indicate which CSOs are involved, to what extent they are active partners, or how they partner with UNICEF in CSSP advocacy initiatives.

A number of organisations have successfully built on their service delivery roots to create inclusive advocacy foundations. For example, NACWOLA – the National Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (an "indigenous, membership-based organisation started in 1992 and run by and for women living with HIV")— is driving transformational policy development to strengthen home-based care-related social protection policies for households affected by HIV and AIDS. Through their extensive community presence the reach of sexual and reproductive health, PMTCT, drug adherence, economic, social and legal support services are extended beyond formal public service centres. What is critical to the success and

sustainability of the organisation's role and realisation of its objectives is that its members are strengthened and supported in advocating for improved social protection policies (UNAIDS, 2011).

At a local level, CSOs are involved in monitoring government expenditure and delivery of services for children in the health and education sectors. Through their participation in committees they are able to feed this information into policy dialogues with resulting improvements in social protective benefits for children. For example, the Kabarole Research and Resource Centre and the Gulu NGO forum have used Participatory Public Expenditure Monitoring (PPEM) tools initially developed by the World Bank to monitor and advocate for improved use of public education and health funds in the Acholi and Ruwenzori regions (USAID Uganda, 2011).

A World Bank study in 2007 found that in communities where monitoring took place, there was a definite improvement in the health outcomes of children compared to those where there was no monitoring. Improvements were noted in weight gain among infants, lower child mortality rates, increased use of health services and a higher rate of births at treatment facilities (USAID Uganda, 2011). Local community-based monitoring of services and meetings with service providers in Uganda resulted in improvements in the quality of health care at local clinics, as well as increased immunization rates and reduced child mortality in active communities when compared to control groups (Devarajan, Khemani, & Walton, July 2011).

CSOs have worked collectively, pooling resources and technical expertise, to engage in budget analysis and successful advocacy for increased political commitment to expanded government funding of sexual and reproductive health services, health care, nutrition, and education services and support for children. The Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), formed in 2004, has mobilized CSOs to engage in budget advocacy work. Over the last ten years CSOs have used this forum to influence the budget process. It has produced a number of position papers on key child-sensitive social protection topics, including the CSBAG *Position Paper on Education and Financing Special Needs Education in Uganda 2014*; Citizen's Budgets to incorporate the views of the poor and marginalised, as well as alternative budget proposals; and monitoring reports such as *A Community Score Card for Family Planning Services 2013* (Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group, 2014).

A number of organisations have also joined forces under the umbrella of the Uganda Social Protection Platform (USSP) to develop a collective petition calling for the scaled-up roll out of social protection for the benefit of the aged in Uganda. The petition was signed by relevant organisations as well as more than 1,000 older people, and was handed to the Speaker of the Ugandan Parliament for inclusion in the upcoming parliamentary budget framework (Uganda Social Protection Platform; Uganda Reach the Aged Association; National Network for Older Persons of Uganda, 2014).

International and national CSOs have also established a Civil Society Coalition on Scaling up Nutrition (UCCO-SUN). Through the coordination of initiatives across the country, UCCO-SUN has enabled the organized participation of CSOs in the development of national policies supporting the nutritional wellbeing of children. For example, UCCO-SUN members are part of the multi-sectoral technical working group responsible for drafting the country's Nutrition Action Plan. UCCO-SUN has facilitated parliamentary lobbying, which has resulted in MPs advocating for improved legislation for mothers, infants and young children. It also enables coordinated advocacy for improved programmes and governance of child-sensitive nutrition at district level. 20 MPs were supported through the Parliamentary Forum for Children to visit communities and sensitise district government officials on responses to underlying determinants of child malnutrition (Scaling up Nutrition (SUN), 2014).

On the research front, CSO's have generated evidence to inform the development of responsive social protection, as well as to address some of the persistent ideological and political impediments to increased public investment in expanded social protection. For example, Development Research and Training (DRT) is an NGO that has produced significant research supporting expanded social protection in Uganda. DRT observes that, while arguments for increased investments in social protection are based on technical economic evidence of impact and sustainability, these technical arguments are often not widely understood, and hence fail to gain traction among decision-makers. DRT has thus deliberately crafted its research agenda, developed a professional network and documented and shared its research outputs in order simultaneously to reduce the knowledge deficit and promote political will and understanding of social protection and its benefits (Onapa, 2011).

The DRT has ensured that its research outputs have an impact on policy through a number of strategic moves, including the following:

1. Establishing a working relationship with focal persons in relevant ministries and departments Addressing hostile mindsets, using research addressing underlying resistance to expanded social protection.

2. As an example of the latter, DRT used findings from a study entitled *Culture and Social Protection for the Very Poor* to show that social protection is not a foreign concept and is rooted in Uganda's traditional systems and practices.

Factors enabling CSO participation in strengthening CSSP opportunities in Uganda

- **An enabling legal environment:** the legal environment in Uganda has improved over the years, with a number of laws in place that promote CSO activity. These include the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and the Local Government Amendment Act, 1997. The Social Protection Policy Framework currently in development, which will guide the implementation of a multi-sectoral social protection programme, is founded on the principle of CSO participation (The Republic of Uganda, May 2013). The increasing legal space for CSOs has seen a proliferation of CSOs and an expanded advocacy role for them, notably in the area of human rights advancement (USAID Uganda, 2011) (The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2014).

- **Positive working relationship between CSOs and government:** the expanding advocacy role of CSOs has been facilitated over the past five years by a growing positive relationship between CSOs and government with, according to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "elements of mutual respect and mutual benefit in invited dialogue spaces, especially in policy formulation and implementation" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2013).

- **Active and receptive legislature:** in Uganda, according to Dickinson et. al., "an active legislature which routinely engaged in budget debates and worked through committees to influence executive decisions offered a more receptive environment for CSOs to shape budget priorities, and strengthened participation, transparency and accountability in the process" (Dickinson, Huntington, Loewenson, Terri Collins, & Druce, Fall 2012).

- **Strategic working partnerships between CSOs, MPs and the media:** a key lesson from Uganda is that building strategic partnerships across CSOs, involving the media and parliamentary networks early in the process, has supported the implementation and success of advocacy strategies and outcomes (Dickinson, Huntington, Loewenson, Terri Collins, & Druce, Fall 2012).

Challenges to inclusive CSSP development in Uganda

- **An ambiguous and potentially restrictive legal environment:** while Uganda's governing environment is regarded as generally enabling, ambiguities in the laws and recent developments such as the Cabinet-approved Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) Registration (Amendment) Bill could introduce barriers to effective CSO activity (The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2014).

- **Donor dependency:** CSOs in Uganda are highly dependent on donor funds, with the risk of having to pursue donor-driven agendas rather than the interests of the membership they represent (USAID Uganda, 2011).

- **Organizational weakness and insufficient capacity:** a number of CSOs, particularly smaller district-level CSOs, are not well managed and lack advocacy capacity. In consequence, a number of CSOs do not always have a clear understanding of advocacy and lack the "capacity to effectively engage the state in technical processes" (USAID Uganda, 2011).

- **Fragmented civil society:** in as much as government responses have been fragmented, so too has civil society's engagement across sectors and programmes. Lack of conceptual coherence and a common framework to guide collective advocacy has negatively impacted the effectiveness of CSOs in shaping national social protection policies and programmes.

To remedy the lack of a common framework of action, the Uganda Social Protection Platform (USPP) was established in December 2007 to "provide an informed and harmonized civil society voice and efforts on social protection issues aimed at developing and implementing "pro-poorest" policies and programmes in Uganda" (Uganda Social Protection Platform, 2011).The USPP has 30 CSO members, including the Uganda Child NGO Forum. A key initiative of the USPP, intended to address alack of conceptual clarity and consolidate the impact of multiple advocacy initiatives within discreet sectors across Uganda, has been the development, in collaboration with government ministries and agencies, of the Civil Society Strategy for Social Protection in Uganda (2011–2015).

While the Ugandan process provides a uniquely valuable opportunity for advancing CSSP in Uganda, its impact is limited by the apparent failure of the children's sector to use this vehicle to profile CSSP and develop a common CSSP conceptual framework, goals and targets. There is little evidence of systemic and sustained engagement by the children's sector, specifically in the emerging social protection policy arena.

3.1.3 Case study: the role of CSOs in strengthening CSSP in Ghana

In 2007 Ghana introduced a National Social Protection Strategy to maximise the impact of social protection in reducing poverty and inequalities. Ghana's Social Protection Programme includes the following interventions that directly or indirectly benefit children:

1. The provision of cash transfers to the poorest households through the LEAP social assistance programme
2. A National Health Insurance Scheme
3. A school feeding programme
4. Free school uniforms for children living in poverty
5. A National Youth Employment programme (Government of Ghana, April 2014).

Ghana's social protection programme began as a government-only policy agenda; however CSOs did contribute towards its development. A steering committee was established to guide the development of the agenda and CSOs were included in the National Implementation Committee (HelpAge Ghana & African Platform for Social Protection, 21 - 23 March 2013).

Like in Uganda, the number of CSOs engaged in advocacy in Ghana has grown substantially over the past few years. There are an estimated 50,000 registered CSOs active in the areas of advocacy, service delivery, policy and government oversight (Government of Ghana, April 2014). Their management structures vary from highly institutionalized organisations with technically expert staff members to informally organized single-issue-focused community-based groups (Oppong, Oduro, Awal, & Debrah, December 2013).According to the government of Ghana, as a result of CSO engagement in social policy development processes, there "has been positive progress, particularly in reducing social inequalities, such as in education and healthcare"; but "... gains so far have not been evenly distributed across various dimensions of inequality such as gender, children, youth, disabilities, etc." (Government of Ghana, April 2014).

A number of coalitions have been established to advance essential components of CSSP, notably in the areas of education and health. Through these coalitions, CSOs have participated in policy-making processes with a view to strengthening a number of areas linked to CSSP. Ghana's National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC), a coalition of almost 200 members, advocates for free and basic universal quality education. It has led the campaign for Education for All, which resulted in fee waivers in the form free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (UNITERRA, 2014). Since 2008, GNECC has used the outcomes of its monitoring of (a) the rural/urban divide in resources, and (b) equity in opportunities and outcomes to advocate successfully that government reprioritise resources to reach educationally marginalised districts (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013).

The members of the Ghana Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS) work in partnership with each other, development partners, and various ministries to "influence policies, remove barriers and promote access to potable water, sanitation and improved hygiene for the poor and vulnerable" (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013).

On the child protection front, the National Coalition on Domestic Violence Legislation successfully advocated for Parliament's adoption of the Domestic Violence Act 2007, and engaged in follow-up advocacy for acceptance of the Act by communities and families (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013).

Ghana's Civil Society Coalition on the MDGs builds the capacity of Ghana's citizens to hold government accountable for delivery of the MDGs (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013). The programme harnesses the collective energy of international, national, regional and district CSOs to monitor progress towards achievement of the MDGs. It also raises awareness and engages citizens in the assessment of progress and advocacy to accelerate change in policy and resource allocation and improve service delivery. It is organized around seven thematic areas:

- Food
- Education
- Gender
- Health
- Water and sanitation and the environment
- Trade and debt
- Youth
- Disability.

Monitoring and advocacy is facilitated at district level through District Citizens Monitoring Committees established in 50 districts; inputs received are used to influence policy at local and national level (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013).

A number of CSOs have also engaged successfully in budget analysis and tracking of resources allocated to the MDGs through research, data gathering, monitoring of resource flows and the provision of feedback into the policy development process. CSOs have worked to advocate for stronger laws and procedures to ensure transparency and accountability for use of allocated resources. This is particularly important given civil society's observation of the negative impacts of corruption and maladministration on social development outcomes in Ghana (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013).

Factors enabling CSO participation in strengthening CSSP opportunities in Ghana

From the preceding examples of advocacy initiatives, the following themes are apparent:

- **Advocacy is collective:** advocacy is more effective when conducted through coalitions acting with a unified voice and drawing on differing levels of expertise and perspective (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013).

- **Relevance of issues:** advocacy is more effective when it is organized around issues of relevance to alliance members, rather than around donor-driven or donor-articulated priorities or concerns (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013).

- **The need for a common and legitimate overarching framework of goals, objectives and outcomes:** if advocacy is centred on common goals set and monitored at a high level, such as the MDGs, outcomes are stronger. This provides an entry point and a common point of discussion and legitimacy, and results in government's willingness to entertain CSOs when they engage in the issues (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013).

Challenges to inclusive CSSP development in Ghana

The overall assessment of the role of CSOs in strengthening CSSP policies and programmes in Ghana (as in other West African countries) is that, subject to a number of exceptions, civil society has not been effectively included in the social protection dialogue. The consensus is that the core impact of the CSO sector remains at the level of service delivery, and CSOs remain at the periphery of policy-making (Oppong, Oduro, Awal, & Debrah, December 2013) (Centre for Social Protection, Institute for Development Studies, ODI, rhvp, DEV, 2010).

Despite the formal inclusion of CSOs within Ghana's Social Protection National Implementation Committee, their role has largely been limited to implementation. While not surprising (the Committee's vision of CSOs' roles as exclusively implementary is evidenced by its title) this situation is flawed, and has meant that there has been insufficient inclusion of CSOs with local knowledge in the design and governance of state-led social protection programmes. In the main, the typical social protection design process followed in Ghana – that is to say the pilot route, followed by scaling-up social of protection programmes – has been insufficiently inclusive (HelpAge Ghana & African Platform for Social Protection, 21 - 23 March 2013).

The impact and success of CSO-driven social protection advocacy in Ghana (and other West African countries) is limited by, among other things:

- **Limited knowledge and advocacy capacity:** a number of CSOs in Ghana, including those that have organized themselves into coalitions, have limited capacity, including for research, analysis, lobbying and strategic planning. Moreover, among CSOs there is often limited knowledge of how government works and where the strategic entry points are for driving particular issues. This is exacerbated by low capacity for the translation of information into clear advocacy messages, effective policy briefs and other lobbying tools (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013).

- **Fragmented civil society:** in Ghana, weak linkages even within coalitions (and especially between CBOs and the bigger national advocacy NGOs) contribute to duplication of work, undermining the impact of the multiple advocacy efforts driven by CSOs (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013).Fragmentation across civil society also undermines the potential collective impact of the many, but separate, initiatives in sub-sectors, such as health and education.

- **Ad hoc participatory processes:** while Ghana has a relatively enabling legal framework, with few regulatory impediments to CSO registration and advocacy, the lack of systematized consultation processes in government policy processes hampers effective participation (Quartey, Ackah, Dufe, & Agyare-Boakye, 2010).

3.2 Trends in the roles played by civil society in strengthening CSSP

From the preceding case studies and other literature, it is apparent that CSOs across Africa are, to varying degrees, engaging in a number of roles, as mandated and obligated by the CSSP normative framework. The roles played by CSOs in the three case studies, as well as in a number of other African countries described below, fall into the following six areas:

1. **Implementation and delivery of social protection services** across the following domains of practice: providing services to extend reach, especially into marginalised areas; implementation of pilot projects to test design and delivery hypotheses with a view to scaling up services; and participation in defining targeting mechanisms.
2. **Conducting research, analyses and evaluations** on the design, impact and benefits of CSSP policies, programmes and budgets.
3. **Advocacy and lobbying** for the adoption of appropriate policies, programmes and budgets in the scaling up of state-led CSSP policies and programmes.
4. **Partnering with governments and supporting them through co-development of policies and programmes,** capacity-building, and transfer of knowledge gained during pilots and research.
5. **Monitoring** of policy and programmatic, budgetary and institutional adequacy, and holding governments to account for compliance with legal and developmental obligations.
6. **Providing a collective organisational framework** for facilitating participation of affected communities, families and children in policy making, programme design and evaluation processes.

These roles are further elaborated below.

3.2.1 Implementation and delivery of social protection services

Across Africa there is a well-established tradition of civil society support in the delivery of social protection services. The motivation for, and nature of the support provided is varied. In some cases it has contributed to strengthened policy and programmatic outcomes.

As the development paradigm has shifted from a charitable to a rights-based framework, so too has the rationale shifted for direct service provision by CSOs. The responsibility for delivery of services rests with the government, and CSO participation in delivery is justified to the extent that it is a springboard to strengthened social protection policies and budgets (Commander, Davies, & Zaman, 2011).

Across the continent, CSOs have played an active role in expanding the reach of services to hard-to-reach areas where governments lack the administrative scale and expertise to ensure effective and efficient delivery of public programmes (Samad, 2009).This type of activity is evidenced in Kenya, where the community based organisation Mukembau has partnered with Plan International to expand community-level knowledge of, and access to, birth registration documents. This is necessary in order to allow children to access a number of social protection services in marginalised and under-serviced areas (UNICEF ESARO, 2013).

Another example is the *Isibindi* model discussed in the South African case study. Through the adoption of this model by the Department of Social Development, and its consequent assumption of responsibility for the training and payment of community-based workers recruited by CSOs, government has sought to ensure the quality and sustainability of services, but has outsourced the delivery to CSOs. A key concern with CSO implementation in many settings is that, in the absence of government oversight of quality and funding, CSO-provided services are at risk of falling away, aggravating inequality and poor access to services in marginalised communities (Institute for Development Studies, November 2012).

In some countries, however, where governments have not developed public social protection programmes, CSOs have sought to fill not only the delivery but also the policy or programmatic gap. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in the absence of a national social protection programme CSOs, with the support of INGOs and development partners, lead the provision of key health, water, sanitation and education programmes (Bailey, Pereznieto, & Jones, May 2011).

Despite the value of CSO service provision, there is a clear and pressing imperative within the rights-based framework to ensure that the role played by CSOs is transitory; that is to say, that it is a mere springboard to securing government's assumption of its basic responsibility to provide universal services, including to marginalised children. Maintaining this balance is especially challenging in post-conflict or fragile states where historically CSOs and development partners have, as a matter of necessity, taken a direct-delivery role to compensate for decimated public infrastructure and systems (Rodriguez-Garcia, Wilson, York, Low, N'Jie, & Bonnel, 2013) (Gelsdorf, Maxwell, & Mazurana, August 2012).

Moreover, while CSO participation in implementation does not directly equate to participation in, or lead to, strengthened child-sensitive social protection policy development across Africa, the widespread practice by CSOs of partnering with governments in the delivery of services does offer a strategic vehicle for gaining access to dialogue spaces (Oppong, Oduro, Awal, & Debrah, December 2013).A number of CSO implementation programmes have identified and built on the advocacy potential implicit in delivery programmes to catalyse sustainable and lasting change.

Service provision as a foundation for CSO-driven policy and programme improvement

The earlier examples of the Child Advocacy Project (CAP) project in South Africa and the NACWOLA community-based initiative in Uganda demonstrate the use of a service provision platform as an entry point for community-informed, community-driven policy advocacy to address underlying access barriers.

In addition to working within an existing public programme, a number of CSOs have partnered to develop and implement small-scale child-sensitive social protection pilot programmes. The objective of the pilots has been to test design, targeting and delivery vehicles, as well as to collect evidence of impact in order to create an evidence base for advocacy for large-scale state-owned social protection programmes. For example, three INGOs — Oxfam, Care International (Kenya) and Concern Worldwide — implemented a three-phase project to improve food and livelihood security of vulnerable households in Nairobi's urban informal settlements.

The first and second phases provided immediate protective and preventative relief through skills development and cash transfers to 5,000 households, to help them set up businesses. The third phase involved series of longer-term transformative plans to influence key stakeholders to develop a co-ordinated, systematic monitoring approach and advocate to government to invest in social protection for vulnerable urban populations (Oxfam, October 2012). With the Kenyan government having adopted the cash transfer model in a state-led pilot project targeting 10,000 urban households, the support from INGOs has been in the form of capacity building of government officials in programme design and monitoring, and in reviewing implementation processes and systems. The project not only strengthened policy outcomes and government capacity, but it also strengthened local CSO capacity in terms of social protection knowledge and advocacy skills (Oxfam, October 2012).

What is evident from the rationale and design of the various pilots is that achieving longer-term objectives requires deliberate planning to ensure the project yields the necessary evidence to advocate for scale-up. Despite the popularity of pilots, Devereux, among others, cautions against the over-enthusiastic use of pilot initiatives that are not scaleable, the small focus of which distorts both the challenges of implementation and the programme's impact. This note of caution is particularly pertinent in the case of African countries where social protection is still in its infancy (Centre for Social Protection, Institute for Development Studies, ODI, rhvp, DEV, 2010).

Community involvement in targeting and monitoring of beneficiaries

Across a number of African countries, CSOs at community level frequently participate in the use of targeting tools to identify and monitor qualifying beneficiaries and households. A common strategy is the organisation of committees called local OVC committees, or LOCs. Their success varies according to a number of factors, including whether or not committees are adequately resourced by higher-state agencies in terms of power, finances and expertise (Devarajan, Khemani, & Walton, July 2011).

Malawi's Machinga scheme provides cash transfers to labour constrained households unable to access other poverty reduction interventions. Its targeting methodology is inclusive, using a "multi-stage participatory process that involves community committees." The target population of an estimated 3,400 households is identified by Community Social Protection Committees nominated by their respective communities (Schubert, June 2007).

Kenya's Cash Transfer Programme for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) provides regular cash transfers to extremely poor families living with OVC. The transfers are linked to a "set of human development responsibilities/conditions that enrolled beneficiaries/caregivers should fulfil (e.g. attendance at health facilities for immunisation/growth monitoring/Vitamin A supplementation, school attendance)" (Jackson, Butters, Byambaa, Davies, & Perkins, July 2011). The criteria for eligibility are set at a national policy level, but application and the identification of eligible beneficiaries, as well as the monitoring of conditionality compliance, is done by LOCs composed of community leaders who bring knowledge of potentially eligible households. The active role played by LOCs has been pivotal in strengthening the human development outcomes of the programme. In most of the community-targeting programmes, however, the role of community members is limited to implementing a predefined set of criteria determined from the top down. Community members are often not involved in the design of the targeting mechanism or in defining the eligibility criteria (Centre for Social Protection, Institute for Development Studies, ODI, rhvp, DEV, 2010).

The Rwandan *Ubudebe* programme differs from the previous examples. It seeks to unlock and build on social capital by engaging communities in the identification and definition of vulnerable groups, as well as through their ongoing participation in the application of defined criteria to identify programme beneficiaries. *Ubudebe* is not a new concept, and the term itself refers to a collective action and form of participatory development that has been undertaken for decades in Rwanda. Previously, *Ubudede* corresponded to social meetings in villages to discuss community issues (Ruberangeyo, Ayebare, & de Laminne de Bex, 2011).

3.2.2 Conducting research and analysis into the design, impact and benefits of CSSP policies, programmes and budgets

As observed in the cases of Uganda and South Africa, CSOs have played a key role in developing an evidence base, through research, to support the extension or revised design of social protection policies, programmes and budget allocations. Research has been undertaken by CSOs to:

- Understand the risk-drivers and causality affecting children's social and economic circumstances and adverse developmental outcomes, to support the development of appropriately designed social protection interventions
- Address concerns and allay fears around possible "perverse incentives" that inhibit political will — especially with regard to scaled-up cash transfer programmes
- Demonstrate the impact and developmental value of social protection investments for children.

CSOs have clearly played, and can potentially continue to play, a critical role in building the evidence base necessary to inform governments and convince them to increase their investments in scaled-up social protection policies and programmes that benefit children.

CSOs engaged in research must ensure that the evidence collected is fed into the policy development cycle. This requires the charting of concrete strategic pathways through which the evidence may be channelled into appropriate policy development platforms. This in turn requires that CSOs build political foundations and networks to ensure that political players have a role in crafting the research agenda they intend to undertake. They must ensure early buy-in and make sure that results are packaged and shared in relevant, accessible formats using appropriate forums.

3.2.3 Advocacy to advance political will and strengthen national social protection policies, programming and budgets

As noted earlier, civil society has rich history of engaging in service delivery and research, and through these channels has access to information that is pertinent to and essential for the development of responsive social protection. The challenge, however, is to effectively harness this information and ensure it is utilised in government decision-making spaces to make social protection programmes more sensitive to the specific needs of children. Across Africa, a number of CSOs have identified and made use of access points and platforms to engage with their respective national policy-making processes in order to strengthen the social protection system for the benefit of vulnerable children.

Sector-specific collective advocacy

Collective advocacy for policy change is a common strategy employed by CSOs across Africa, and has been put to effective use in shaping child-sensitive social policies in sub-sectors such as health, education, social security and child protection. As noted in the preceding case studies, CSOs in South Africa, Uganda and Ghana have mobilised constituents with shared interests to engage in policy development and strengthen access to education, healthcare, nutrition and social security.

Collective advocacy is not, however, limited to the countries featured in the preceding case studies. It is a common occurrence across the continent and beyond. For example, in Tanzania, more than 150 national and international CSOs engage in collective advocacy under the banner of the Tanzania Education Network/Mtandaowa Elimu Tanzania (TEN/MET) to influence policies for equitable, high-quality basic education for all children. A key strategy employed by the network is capacity building and empowerment of CSOs to engage with government officials and share problems and solutions to achieve the network's goals. Through the process of shared inclusive dialogue the network has made an impact on protective policies preventing children from dropping out of school, such as the capitation and language of learning policies (TEN/MET, 2013).

Within the food and nutrition sector, the SUN initiative is a global collective that has gained traction across many African countries. It harbours significant potential for capacitating and mobilising CSOs to promote CSSP, given the fundamental importance of food and nutrition security to the latter agenda. With the support of INGOs and UNICEF, SUN multi-sectoral platforms to address malnutrition have been established in several countries, including Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Nigeria and Namibia.

In the arena of child protection, a pan-African drive by INGOs, UNICEF and local CSO child-protection partners for strengthened holistic child-protection systems has contributed to stronger linkages between social protection and the formal child protection system, and as a result has strengthened national CSSP policy and programme development (Inter-agency group on Child Protection Systems in sub-Saharan Africa, 2012).

Advocacy clustered around developmental thematic platforms

In addition to networking across Africa, CSOs have come together within the frameworks provided by thematic global, regional and national developmental commitments such as the MDG's, the Education For All (EFA) targets and various HIV and AIDS initiatives, to advocate for strengthened national social policies for children. Evidence for this includes:

- Ghana's Civil Society Coalition on the MDGs, which builds the capacity of Ghana's citizens to hold government accountable for delivery of the MDGs (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013).

- South Africa's mobilisation of CSOs under the banner of the Yezingane Children's Network to ensure effective, capable representation of the children's sector within the South African National AIDS council (SANAC).

Budget analysis and advocacy

One of the key blockages preventing CSSP progress is reluctance to increase and sustain investments in comprehensive, universal systematised programmes for children. Strategic budget analysis and advocacy is a critical platform for overcoming this.

Budget advocacy has been used successfully by CSOs to drive increased allocations of, and accountability for, public funds in support of child-sensitive social protection programmes. For example, The African Child Policy Forum, through its flagship publication *the African Report on Child Wellbeing*, prompted the Budgeting for Children initiative. This report highlighted the need for increasing budgets to child-sensitive social protection programmes, which are generally the least financed sectors in a number of African countries (ACPF, The African Report on Child Wellbeing 2011: Budgeting for Children in Africa, 2011). In Uganda, there is also a similar initiative undertaken by the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) promoting for increased budget to social services including social protection. Similarly, CSOs in Ghana are engaged in MDG-related budget analysis and advocacy and those in South Africa such as TAC have used budget analysis and advocacy to increase public investment in PMTCT and social security.

Political and parliamentary lobbying

Pre-election lobbying: CSOs have engaged in pre-election lobbying to secure the inclusion of social protection in political parties' election manifestos and campaign undertakings. In Sierra Leone, a coalition of CSOs advocating for improved water and sanitation conditions, WASH-NET, embarked on a pre-election campaign called 'Voting for Water and Sanitation'. Various strategies were employed, including getting candidates to sign pledge cards committing to improve water and sanitation conditions if they were elected. In the 12 months following the election there have been substantial gains in the level of government funding commitments to the WASH sector, and a new dedicated Ministry of Water was established (Oppong, Oduro, Awal, & Debrah, December 2013).

Parliamentary lobbying: in addition to the examples cited in the Ugandan and South African case studies, parliamentary lobbying has been employed successfully in other African countries. The Platform for Social Protection in Zambia engages with parliament through various mechanisms, including written submissions, to highlight necessary actions for stronger social protection. For example, in 2012 it developed and submitted a Memorandum to the parliamentary committee on health, the aged and social protection that documented the inadequacy of the current social protection framework for the elderly. This Memorandum noted expressly that the elderly bear a significant responsibility for caring for orphans and other vulnerable children in Zambia (Platform for Social Protection Zambia, 2012).

3.2.4 Strengthening government accountability for their developmental commitments and for policy implementation

National governments, as signatories to the CRC and the ACRWC, are responsible for addressing the rights and vulnerabilities of all citizens, including children (ACPF, The African Report on Child Wellbeing 2013: Towards greater accountability to Africa's children, 2013) (Children Affected by HIV/AIDS Working Group & Better Care Network, Netherlands, June 2012). They must take the lead, and must be held accountable for the institutional arrangements necessary to yield effective, child-sensitive social protection systems, policies and programmes.

CSOs have played an important role in promoting government accountability for fulfilling their social protection responsibilities to children. The relationship between a rights foundation and the ability of CSOs to hold governments to account is strengthened considerably where international obligations are domesticated in national constitutions and laws (Proudlock P. , 2010). The fact that South Africa's constitution and laws such as the Social Assistance Act enshrine the right of children to social protection and associated services and benefits (which, unlike the rights of adults, are not made subject to progressive realisation) has provided an enabling framework for successful litigation by TAC and ACESS, among others, to compel expanded social protection laws (Devereux & Cipryk, 2009).

However, accountability mechanisms extend beyond strategic litigation. For example, they include the following:

- At continental level, the Child-friendliness Index of African Governments is a good example of an accountability monitoring framework used to assess the extent to which governments are committed to realising the rights and wellbeing of their children. As an advocacy tool it promotes accountability to children and compliance with commitments including child-sensitive social protection addressing multidimensional child poverty and vulnerability (ACPF, The African Report on Child Wellbeing 2013: Towards greater accountability to Africa's children, 2013).

- At country level the Platform for Social Protection (PSP) in Zambia engaged in a mission in 2010 to monitor social cash transfers and the Public Welfare Assistance Scheme. The objective was to assess government compliance with its responsibilities and use the results to advocate for improved programme design and increased commitment to social protection.

- In Rwanda, a Child Rights Observatory has been established within the National Human Rights Commission, which is replicated at district level. The role of the Observatory is to monitor and report on child-rights violations (Ruberangeyo, Ayebare, & de Laminne de Bex, 2011).

From the preceding examples as well as those cited under the three case studies above, it is clear that CSOs can play an important monitoring role, assessing compliance and the adequacy of national social protection responses against legal commitments and the needs of affected communities. This is of intrinsic value; but the value of monitoring programmes can also be greatly enhanced to strengthen the transformative foundations of the social protection system if approaches and methodologies are deliberately designed to:

- Increase community participation
- Provide policy options and good practices that give insights into solutions
- Feed into the policy and programme cycle to improve effectiveness.

3.3 Challenges to, and opportunities for, CSO participation

3.3.1 Challenges

CSOs face a number of common challenges to effective participation in dialogue around social protection policy, programme design, implementation and monitoring. These challenges are particularly pronounced in the children's sector, which has not, outside of South Africa, made its presence felt in emerging platforms and dialogue spaces. While there have been developments in social protection policies and programmes in a number of African countries which will benefit children, there is little documented evidence of targeted CSO gains in CSSP policies and programmes.

There are two sets of factors that limit the full and effective participation of civil society in policy development processes (Samad, 2009). These are:

- External challenges related to general legal and political conditions, existence of participatory governance systems and available space for free association and engagement in policy processes
- Internal constraints related to CSO capacity and resources.

External challenges:

- **Restrictive political and legal environments:** for civil society to flourish it requires a favourable enabling environment, which depends upon the actions and the policies of all development actors – donors, governments and CSOs themselves. The extent to which the environment is enabling is a key determinant of CSO involvement in policy dialogue and coordinated engagement in implementation (the OECD, 2010 in (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2013). A country's broader constitutional and legislative backdrop governing the rights and roles of civil society in policy dialogue is key to a culture of participation: where laws governing registration and conduct of CSOs are restrictive, the space for CSO activities narrows substantially. Insufficient democratic structures, limited freedom of association and conflict and war all inhibit CSO activity. For example, in most North African countries, CSOs are faced with highly restrictive conditions and centralised power structures that limit the space for participatory decision-making (Samad, 2009). In Uganda, as previously cited, while there has been a liberalising trend more recent developments have seen a narrowing of the enabling space, with restrictive provisions used to suppress issues that do not enjoy political support. In South Africa, in contrast, the liberal CSO space has allowed not only for active CSO advocacy, but also for strong, coordinated collective advocacy initiatives.

- **Weak and *ad hoc* participatory processes within the formal policy development processes:** in many countries, participatory processes such as notice and comment processes, public hearings and children's parliaments are not systematised or routinely available to facilitate inclusive policy development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2013).

- **The politicisation of social protection:** this may result in the selection of beneficiaries and design of benefits in favour of those with political capital. However, it can also be an opportunity: where CSSP becomes a campaigning issue it can give vulnerable groups a previously unheard voice in political dialogue (Devereux & Cipryk, 2009).

Internal challenges:

- **Capacity and resource constraints:** many CSOs continue to face capacity constraints in Africa, especially where there is a history of direct service delivery (World Bank: Social Development Department, 2005). This is particularly pronounced in post-conflict societies where CSOs have not had an opportunity to develop the skills, networks and access to resources necessary to engage effectively in policy development. Rwanda is a good case in point: there has been significant growth in its post-conflict recovery period, but civil society activities remain in an embryonic state due to a variety of practical considerations. The vast majority of CSOs are grassroots associations focused on issues of livelihood, with little capacity to engage in public policy issues more strategically. Likewise, it has been difficult for urban-based advocacy CSOs to make connections to grassroots CSOs (The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2014). Many African CSOs, as cited in the Ghanaian and Ugandan case studies, also lack the necessary advocacy, research, analytical, strategic planning and communication skills to collect evidence and translate it into clear policy positions as a foundation of policy engagement. The wealth of information created by CSOs has not been utilised to inform the broader national social protection dialogue or formulate appropriate policy (Jackson, Butters, Byambaa, Davies, & Perkins, July 2011). Often, CSOs lack consistency in their involvement in the policy process, as many of them have not systematised policy advocacy across their operations due to capacity limitations that prevent them from developing clear advocacy strategies (Oppong, Oduro, Awal, & Debrah, December 2013).Furthermore, the current funding climate has seen advocacy funding dry up — particularly in middle-income countries — and has left an advocacy vacuum in its wake.

- **Lack of knowledge of government workings and the apparatus of state:** many CSOs do not know or strive to know how government departments work, how policies are made, and what the full implications of developmental policies are for their interest group or constituency (Oppong, Oduro, Awal, & Debrah, December 2013). Transposed onto the children's sector, this is particularly pertinent: participation in broader development policy dialogue with a view to rendering it child-sensitive requires consistent engagement across policy domains and a sophisticated level of understanding of the implications for children. CSOs often also lack sufficient access to, and skills to engage meaningfully with, key centres of decision-making such as finance ministries (Centre for Social Protection, Institute for Development Studies, ODI, rhvp, DEV, 2010).

- **Lack of conceptual clarity and a common framework for CSSP:** social protection is multi-faceted and cuts across different departments and sectors. In the absence of a coherent national social protection framework that identifies a common national goal and the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, there is little prospect of systemic and effective participation of all players, notably children's sector CSOs, in the development of CSSP policies and programmes. Thus while there is improved conceptual clarity around social protection generally – as facilitated by processes such as the Civil Society Strategy for Social Protection in Uganda (2011–2015) – the same clarity is not evident in the context of CSSP specifically. There is generally a lack of common understanding of the main aspects of child-sensitive social protection among CSOs in the children's sector, which in turn limits their capacity to engage in promoting the agenda (ACPF and ODI, 2013).

- **Proliferation of CSOs and weak coordination:** while the proliferation of CSO work across Africa offers an opportunity for robust advocacy, at the same time this poses a challenge, with many organisations duplicating efforts and failing to work collaboratively or speak collectively, thereby missing opportunities for greater impact in dialogue spaces. This is aggravated by weak and underfunded coordination mechanisms to drive development and synergies across organisations (World Bank: Social Development Department, 2005).

3.3.2 Opportunities for overcoming challenges and ensuring sustained inclusive CSSP

Although there are multiple challenges, CSOs have ample opportunities to participate and engage meaningfully in the development of strong CSSP policies and programmes.

- **Increasing democratisation and improvements in governance:** increased, robust democratisation of countries in Africa and (though limited in pace)an accompanying enhancement of participatory governance has opened up relations between CSOs and governments in many countries. This creates advocacy space for more effective and sustained state-led inclusive participatory processes.

- **Growth in child-friendliness of national legal frameworks:** there is a positive trend in the child-friendliness scores of African countries, driven in the main by the development of stronger child-protection legal frameworks to protect children from abuse, neglect and exploitation (The African Child Policy Forum, 2013).Improvements across the continent present unique opportunities for strengthening child-sensitive social protection. The improved scores reflect a growing political commitment to putting children at the top of national policy agendas, and an opening of the space for targeted policy dialogue whereby the children's advocates can interrogate the child-sensitivity of emerging social protection programmes.

- **Growing emphasis on strengthened child protection systems:** related to the previous point is the potential within the current focus on strengthening child protection systems. This is currently being driven in large measure by CSOs and UN agencies in a number of African countries. The dialogue opening up around the strengthening of these systems provides significant space for developing strong social protection measures as an integral part of the emerging holistic child protection system.

- **Learning from the nutrition sector:** within the nutrition sector the SUN initiative offers potential space for advancing child-sensitive nutrition policies that address food security and the nutritional development of children. Save the Children is currently working with SUN Civil Society Network on a project to equip nutrition experts in Bangladesh with improved understanding of the potential of social protection and how it can lead to better nutrition outcomes. This will work through the SUN Civil Society Network in Bangladesh to increase civil society advocacy capacity to influence government, in the hope of developing and shaping national nutrition-focused social protection that positively impacts children (Richards, 2014).

- **Advocacy spaces linked to MDGs and the post-2015 development agenda:** CSO participation is more effective when conducted within an overarching, legitimate framework of goals, objectives and outcomes set and monitored at higher levels, such as the MDGs. This provides a common point of discussion and legitimacy, resulting in increased willingness on the part of government to involve CSOs in development issues (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013).Broader developmental frameworks, targets and monitoring processes for determining in-country progress are generally the products of international, continental or regional collaborative initiatives. These platforms offer important opportunities for CSO advocacy to ensure the visibility and profiling of CSSP targets, goals, outcomes and associated accountability mechanisms for national progress.

- **CSO Platforms:** platforms such as the Africa Platform for Social Security provide unique but as yet untapped spaces for advancing the visibility of CSSP (as opposed to social protection more broadly) in—for example —the emerging post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda. Furthermore, the Common African Position on Post-2015 Development, which benefited immensely from various regional and national consultations involving CSOs and young people, emphasises the need for an enabling environment to foster development through enhancing democratic practices and mechanisms locally, nationally and continentally, ensuring citizens' meaningful involvement in decision-making at all levels (AU, 2014)

- **Growth in social solidarity across civil society:** there has been substantial growth in solidarity across civil society. A number of CSOs have harnessed this opportunity to establish collective advocacy platforms and enhance the unity and impact of their advocacy. Establishment of such consortia are also useful for pooling resources, skills, knowledge and political entry points in order to overcome the internal and external challenges inhibiting full CSO participation in human rights and development issues (Oppong, Oduro, Awal, & Debrah, December 2013).In Kenya, for example, the Social Protection Actors Forum (SPAF) was established in 2008 to bring together all non-state actors to "synergise their efforts and amplify their voices on matters affecting social protection in Kenya." The establishment of the SPAF was motivated by the recognition that CSOs' contributions to social protection development are critical. It was thus established as a coalition, with the aim of promoting citizen's engagement in the development, implementation and evaluation of social protection interventions in Kenya (Social Protection Actors Forum).Similarly, CSOs in Zambia have come together to form the Platform for Social Protection in Zambia, which is a "national platform of CSOs advocating for the development and implementation of effective policies and programmes for social protection" (Platform for Social Protecion Zambia, 2014).The platform has pursued a number of advocacy campaigns and ensured CSO representation in national social protection policy dialogue. It was also involved in the Technical Working Group responsible for formulation of the National Social Protection Policy (Platform for Social Protecion Zambia, 2014).

- **Partnering of INGOs and UNICEF with national CSOs:** from the preceding examples it is evident that many social protection development processes in African countries are initiated and led by INGOs, UNICEF and development partners such as the World Bank. For example, while Togo has an institutionalized mechanism for collaborative social protection planning and monitoring in the form of a sectoral committee on social protection —"*promotion et protection sociale, emploi*" —the lead policy shapers responsible for development of its 2012 National Social Protection Policy were government, UN agencies and INGOS, with little or no mention of the role of CSOs (World Bank Human Development Department Social Protection Unit Africa Region, 2012). This general dynamic has elicited criticism that social protection policies have been pushed and paid for by external parties that appear to have acquired propriety over process, without having brought in local NGOs in from the start. For example, it is argued that in Ghana there has been little meaningful inclusion of CSOs and affected communities with local knowledge or capacity in the design and governance of state-led social protection programmes. It has been noted that only those CSOs with proven financial muscle, rather than adequate local knowledge, are considered "true partners" (HelpAge Ghana & African Platform for Social Protection, 21 - 23 March 2013).

A number of examples cited in this paper, however, such as Oxfam's food security programme in Nairobi, UNICEF facilitating CSSP in Uganda, and Save the Children UK engaging with the SUN initiative in Bangladesh, point to an emerging trend that holds significant potential for strengthened national CSO participation in CSSP policy dialogue. INGOs and development agencies are engaging in a deliberate strategy to ensure local CSO participation in and ownership of CSSP processes. They are partnering with national CSOs, supporting the development of multi-sectoral CSSP policy platforms that include CSOs, and building local capacity to make full, effective use of emerging policy spaces to shape CSSP agendas. While this trend provides valuable opportunities for strengthening national CSO participation, learning from these processes is hampered by limited documentation of the type of support provided, the impact of support on national CSOs' ability to participate, and the effects of their participation.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

There are cogent reasons for the inclusion of CSOs, notably national CSOs, in the development of stronger CSSP policies and programmes. In the past, however, CSOs across Africa have not (with some exceptions) been effectively included in social protection policy dialogues. Efforts have been hampered by, among other things, a lack of enabling legal environments, poor institutionalization of participatory processes by governments, low CSO capacity, inadequate resources, and fragmentation of civil society.

In recent years, however, there has been evidence of change, with more CSOs, notably national ones, engaging in advocacy to strengthen the social protection of children. This has been driven not only by the growing size and role of national CSOs, but also by the creation of government-led platforms and processes. These have been boosted by the work of development partners and INGOs in supporting national CSOs by facilitating sustained and meaningful participation in social protection policy dialogue. Progressive laws have liberalised external environments, and formal, systemic procedures have been established for CSO input into social protection policies. In South Africa, for example, the NDP was co-crafted through formal government-led processes that opened up spaces for even the remotest communities to share their views. The Ugandan government has likewise led the development of "an official framework for collaboration between government and civil society", with each sector of government having working committees, "within which members of the CSO community participate" (Pedersen & Bamwine, March 2013).

In spite of these progressive developments, CSO participation, notably participation of national child-rights CSOs, remains limited in a number of countries across Africa for a variety of reasons. Some of the key challenges requiring priority attention include the following:

The limited role allocated to CSOs in social protection platforms: while there has been growth in the number of inclusive social protection platforms where CSOs can engage, a number of governments still limit the role of CSOs to supporting implementation (as in the case of Ghana).

Limited utilization of available advocacy space within government's policy platforms: it is evident that some of the national and regional platforms do offer space for CSOs to shape policy. There is little documented evidence, however, of the manner and extent to which CSOs are making use of the emerging invited spaces, or of the impact that their participation in these spaces is having on the resulting social protection policies. A number of reports document reservations from within civil society about the efficiency and effectiveness with which those on the platforms make use of the space to advance sectoral interests (USAID Uganda, 2011).At national level, there is little evidence of CSOs participating in emerging social protection platforms, or of the advancement of CSSP within these spaces. There is also little evidence regarding institutionalized child-friendly participatory spaces and the routine participation of children in development of social protection policy development.

Insufficient articulation across sectoral platforms: there is substantial CSO engagement in platforms and processes aligned to specific sectors responsible for various social protection services and benefits, such as health and education; but there are insufficient linkages between these platforms and national social protection platforms and policies. In many countries, the lack of an overarching national CSSP framework with associated institutional arrangements impedes the effective coordination of CSOs. The absence of such a framework is a barrier to uniting, embracing and defining specific roles of CSOs.

Insufficient coordination and limited capacity and resources among national CSOs: a fundamental limitation of the ability of CSOs, notably national child rights CSOs, to make maximum use of increasing opportunities for participation is their limited advocacy and coordination capacity and resources. This contributes to fragmentation and failure to advance clear, evidence-based arguments for stronger CSSP.

4.2 Recommendations and way forward

In addition to the legal and developmental imperative to accelerate social protection across the continent, so too is there an imperative to accelerate CSO participation in these processes. This requires that all responsible role players, including governments, development agencies, UNICEF, INGOs and national CSOs themselves, take action to facilitate CSO engagement in national-led social protection. This requires that CSOs become organized, technically equipped, and better resourced to engage in the continuum from advocacy through policy development to implementation, monitoring and accountability. Civil society organisations must therefore be supported by both government and development partners, and supported more consistently through capacity development initiatives that enable them to engage in social protection in the longer-term.

Recommendations for national governments

1. Governments are obliged to develop and systematize effective child-sensitive social protection policies and programmes that promote children's developmental outcomes and contribute to fulfilment of their fundamental rights. Such child-sensitive social protection programmes require the participation of CSOs in all aspects of policy and programme design and implementation.

2. The provision of state-led child-sensitive social protection is dependent on systematizing: (a) the provision of social protection through state institutional arrangements, multi-sectoral platforms, policy frameworks and budgets, and (b) the engagement of CSOs with defined roles and responsibilities in the transparent design, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes. CSO contributions can therefore be more synergistic and measured against transparent benchmarks.

3. Where these have not been developed, governments should create and resource participatory social protection platforms and processes that include adequate CSO representation. These platforms must include special processes to involve marginalised groups such as children with disabilities through provision of appropriate communication mechanisms and use of technology to ensure their meaningful participation.

4. Governments should also review the extent to which their legal framework facilitates CSO participation in general. For example, where access to information laws are required, governments need to take measures for their introduction (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013), Where laws limit access to information, as in South Africa for example, these should be revised or abolished.

Recommendations for international development partners and INGOs

5. The primary responsibility for the development, resourcing and delivery of national social protection programmes lies with national governments. The primary role of international partners, INGOs and national CSOs is to support the development and implementation of policies and programmes aligned to national social protection policy frameworks and strategies. These organisations must

avoid the parallel delivery of social protection in lieu ofor alongside government obligations and commitments. International development partners and INGOs should therefore play a supportive and catalytic role in facilitating sustained, meaningful inclusion of national CSOs in social protection policy development.

6. Where development agencies and INGOs provide initial support for small-scale pilots, notably in countries where social protection is in its early stages, these projects should, from inception, be aligned to government planning processes. They must also include national CSOs,to ensure greater sustainability of pilots. Deliberate efforts must be made to strengthen the capacity of national CSO partners to participate in the project design and scale up initiatives in the longer-term.

7. Where development partners and INGOs support sectoral platforms promoting for inclusive development of social protection programmes, they should identify and maximise linkages of these programmes with broader social policies and their implementation and monitoring processes to ensure synergy.

8. Development partners should support the coordination of national CSOs through the provision of technical, management and financial support to build and strengthen alliances and other collective structures. In the design of national programmes and in their funding choices, development partners should also support initiatives that build the management and advocacy capacity of national CSOs.

9. Development agencies and INGOs should document their initiatives, noting the manner and extent of their support, and its impact on the capacity of national CSOs. There is a need for information on best practices to facilitate a process of shared learning.

Recommendations for national CSOs

10. National CSOs, notably those advancing children's rights, should:

11. Be more cognizant of the international and pan-African frameworks for social protection, and of the national social protection polices and institutional arrangements that have been put in place to implement them.

12. Articulate their work on CSSP through the strategic identification and alignment of focus areas within the national social protection agendas.

13. Identify the skills, capacities and resources required to advance CSSP, and seek to secure these through partnerships with development agencies, INGOs and other national CSOs.

14. Be aware of national social protection platforms and/or policies where they have been or are being developed, and consciously and deliberately participate in order to advance CSSP in manner that is transparent, professional, results-based and constructive.

15. Organize themselves in alliances and networks that enable them to contribute effectively and collectively towards national social protection goals.

16. Establish mechanisms for sharing experiences and resources to avoid duplication, and maximise synergies of CSO initiatives.

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