

SUMMARY OF KENYA GOVERNMENT POLICIES TO TACKLE POVERTY AND ACHIEVE DEVELOPMENT 1999 TO 2013

The Kenya Government has formulated and implemented a number of policies to address poverty and achieve development with varying impact. There are four main policies used between the years 1999 to 2013. They include The National Poverty Eradication Plan 1999 – 2015, The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, The Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERS) 2003 – 2007 and Kenya Vision 2030. The main goals and programmes of these policies are briefly outlined below.

1. NATIONAL POVERTY ERADICATION PLAN 1999 – 2015

The National Poverty Eradication Plan 1999 – 2015 (NPEP) is a national policy and institutional framework for “urgent action against poverty in Kenya”. Poverty persists in spite of national development planning and special programmes. These initiatives were too lofty and macro to address meso (context) and micro (problems of equity, “access to economic opportunities and social services for the poor” (OP, 1999: xi).

NPEP aligns with the Copenhagen Summit (World Summit for Social Development 1995) which was endorsed by 100 world leaders and focused on eradicating poverty; Universal Primary Education; health for all; and social integration of disadvantaged people (OP, 1999: xi).

The NPEP was formulated through consultation with government, private sector, non-governmental organizations, and donors. Two Participatory Poverty Assessments and the 1994 Welfare Monitoring Survey were used to inform the plan and to give an understanding of the “common needs and hopes of low income groups”. Poverty was deepening in the country with 47% of the rural population and 27% of the urban population living below the poverty line in 1994. In total 12.6 million Kenyans lived in absolute poverty (OP, 1999: xi).

NPEP focused on the poorest areas with the first being North Eastern Province where 80% of the population lived in poverty. Other areas included Nyanza, Western, sections of Rift Valley and Central Provinces, Kilifi, and Eastern Province. The government would do geographical targeting of its efforts to tackle poverty. NPEP had three major components:

- i. The “Charter for social integration”: It stipulated the rights and responsibilities of different actors (government, private sector, civil society) in the delivery of the policy. It also sought to create an enabling environment for pro-poor policies and planning. It set clear targets for government ministries and how to follow-up on the delivery of these targets. It also set targets for sectors in the economy. It also had a plan to train government staff in order to deliver the policy. The Charter stressed the achievement of basic rights (food, shelter, education, water, health) and underscored that achieving these rights were a shared responsibility of all actors. (OP, 1999: xii).

- ii. “Improved access to essential services by low income households that currently lack basic health, education and safe drinking water.” Under the Universal Primary Education, school enrolment was to increase by 4.5% annually. (OP, 1999: xiii).
- iii. A “strategy for broad based economic growth” (OP, 1999: xii). To achieve the social goals set in NPEP there was need for a 6% economic growth (OP, 1999: xiii).

NPEP noted that creating productive employment was one of the biggest challenges. It sought to address this issue by adopting a number of measures including supporting community groups; marketing; removing regulations that obstruct informal businesses; and a balanced development of rural and urban areas. The immediate goal of NPEP was to reduce households living in absolute poverty by 20% come the year 2004. The policy was to be implemented in three phases from 1999 – 2004, 2005 – 2010 and 2011 – 2015. The Poverty Eradication Commission was established to coordinate the implementation of the policy.

2. POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PAPER FOR THE PERIOD 2001 – 2004

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) was for poverty reduction and economic growth. It was developed through participation in 70 districts and also informed by Participatory Poverty Assessments in 10 districts. It captured the priorities of Kenyans in order to reduce poverty. PRSP was “central to developing a pro-poor and pro-growth’ Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) budget. MTEF would redirect resources to pro-poor activities and programmes and “thus improve quality of expenditure.” PRSP was developed through extensive consultations with communities. The government prepared its response to the PRSP in the 2001 national budget and called on the private sector and civil society to have their responses to the same (ROK, 2001: iii).

PRSP is at the centre of a long-term vision outlined in NPEP (ROK, 2001: 1). It is a short-term strategy to implement NPEP in a series of three year plans, the National Development Plan and other development plans and strategies. “In between the PRSP and the NPEP is the National Development Plan, which stipulates policies of a broader nature to be implemented over the medium-term” (ROK, 2001: 2).

The principles of the PRSP include:

- Giving voice to the poor.
- Participation and ownership.
- Transparency, openness and accountability.
- Equitable distribution of national resources and development initiatives. (ROK, 2001: 2 -3).

The objectives of the PRSP are:

- Link policy, planning and budgeting.
- Identify national development objectives and priorities.
- Quality expenditures leading to efficiency gains.
- Harmonize the financial framework.
- Monitoring and evaluation (ROK, 2001: 3).

The government underscores challenges that are affecting Kenya. It identifies the main areas of challenges as governance, HIV/AIDS, pastoralism, gender, youth, financial services, disabilities and the media (ROK, 2001: 37 - 80). The sector priorities of the PRSP include:

- Agriculture and rural development.
- Human resource development.
- Physical infrastructure.
- Trade tourism and industry.
- Public safety, law and order.
- National security.
- Public administration.

3. ECONOMIC RECOVERY STRATEGY FOR WEALTH AND EMPLOYMENT CREATION (ERS) 2003 – 2007

The Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERS) 2003 – 2007 was the National Rainbow Coalition government's response to a deteriorating economy. The main objectives and actions of the ERS were:

- “Poverty reduction: create an enabling and stable macroeconomic environment.
- Wealth creation: strengthening institutions of governance, rehabilitation and expansion of physical infrastructure.
- Employment creation: raising productivity, invest in human capital of the poor” (ROK, 2009: 12).

4. KENYA VISION 2030

Kenya Vision 2030 is the new development blueprint for the years 2008 – 2030 and aims at transforming Kenya into a newly industrializing, “middle-income country providing a high quality life to all its citizens by the year 2030” (GOK, 2007: 1). Vision 2030 was developed through consultations and had input from international experts on “how newly industrialized countries leaped from poverty to widely shared prosperity and equity.” It is built around three pillars: economic, social and political pillars. It follows the

“successful” implementation of the ERS which led to GDP growth of 0.6% in 2002 to 6.1% in 2006 (GOK, 2007: 1).

The economic pillar aims at achieving economic development through growth of 10% per annum beginning in the year 2012. The social pillar “seeks to build a just and cohesive society with social equity in a clean and secure environment.” The political pillar seeks to “realize a democratic system founded on issue-based politics that respect the rule of law, and protects the rights and freedom of every individual in Kenyan society.” Vision 2030 is to be implemented in successive five (5) year Medium-Term Plans with the first being 2008 – 2012. It has flagship projects to generate “rapid and widely shared growth” but they are not the only projects (GOK, 2007: 1).

Vision 2030 is aligned to the Millennium Development Goals which are: to eliminate extreme hunger and poverty; universal primary education; gender equality; reduction in child mortality; improvement in maternal health; lower HIV/AIDS and major disease incidence; environmental sustainability; better partnerships with international development partners.

The foundations of Vision 2030 are macroeconomic stability; continuity in governance reforms; enhanced equity and wealth creation opportunities for the poor; infrastructure; energy; science, technology and innovation (STI); land reform; human resource development; security; public sector reforms. Vision 2030’s attempts to address equity will focus on the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL), communities with high incidence of poverty, unemployed youth, women, and all vulnerable groups (GOK, 2007: 5).

Vision 2030 set out to realize its goal around the three pillars as follows:

Economic Vision and Strategy

The economic strategy seeks to add value to Kenyan products and services; tourism; increasing value in agriculture; better and more inclusive wholesale and retail trade; manufacturing for the regional market; business process outsourcing - BPO (this should contribute 7500 jobs and 10 billion shillings to the GDP by 2012); and financial services.

Social Strategy

The social strategy seeks to invest in the people of Kenya in many ways. These include in the areas of **education and training** (put up 560 secondary schools, recruit 28,000 teachers etc.); **health** (community health); **water and sanitation** (construct dams; rehabilitate water infrastructure); **environment** (rehabilitate 5 water towers: Mau, Mt. Kenya, Aberdares, Cherangani Hills, Mt. Elgon; secure wildlife corridors; solid waste management); **housing and urbanization** (plans for eleven regions; housing development; mortgage); **gender, youth and vulnerable groups** (Women Enterprise Fund; social protection fund; youth centres in constituencies; sports lottery fund and international sports academy; improve Youth Enterprise Fund; build a national cultural centre); **equity and poverty elimination** (public services; income generation activities; “devolved funds”; increasing school enrolment for girls and children from nomadic communities, poor and rural communities; widen the coverage of “essential healthcare”;

equitable distribution of water, sewerage and sanitation services; improved public transport; “gender parity” in delivery of justice).

The Political Pillar

The political pillar seeks to move Kenya to the future as one nation. To achieve this Vision 2030 hinges on the following principles: constitutional supremacy; sovereignty of the people; “equality of citizens”; national values, goals and ideology; a viable political party system; public participation in governance; separation of powers; decentralization.

The political pillar will focus on the following areas: the rule of law; electoral and political processes; democracy and public service delivery; transparency and accountability; security, peace building and conflict management. Vision 2030 has a Vision Delivery Secretariat.

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