

By Rhyman Agaba

Civil society organisations laud govt over African Union protocol on social security

Civil society organisations (CSOs) under the Social Protection Platform Uganda (SPPU) have commended the National Resistance Movement government for ratifying the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Citizens to Social Security and Social Protection.

They described the move as a historic milestone in advancing social justice and inclusive development.

Addressing a press conference in Kampala on Thursday, at ADD International's head office in Kamwokya, SPPU leaders said the ratification affirms social protection and social security as fundamental human rights and reinforces Uganda's commitment to safeguarding the welfare of its citizens, particularly the most vulnerable.

"The ratification of this protocol is a progressive and visionary step by the Government of Uganda," Frederick Ouma Bwire, the chairperson of SPPU, said. "It demonstrates Uganda's commitment to the African spirit of solidarity and to

building resilient communities through comprehensive social protection systems."

Bwire noted that CSOs have for years worked closely with the Government, local authorities, cultural and religious leaders, and other stakeholders to advocate the ratification of regional and international instruments that promote citizens' rights.

He said the African Union protocol provides a strong legal and normative framework that obligates states to ensure access to social security and social protection for all.

The other SPPU members who presented at the press conference included Rebecca Ssanyu, a social protection subject matter expert, SPPU co-ordinator Daphine Akampurira and Kezia Mukasa, a co-ordinator for the Grandmothers Consortium and SPPU member.

The SPPU commended the National Resistance Movement government for having increased the monthly cash grants to senior citizens from



Left to right: Mukasa, Ssanyu, Bwire and Akampurira addressing a press conference at ADD International's head office in Kamwokya, Kampala, on Thursday

sh25,000 to sh35,000 and also reducing the eligibility age from 80 to 65 years.

"This law (African Union protocol on social protection), after being domesticated, will enable us to advocate for more resources," Bwire said.

The CSOs said the protocol aligns closely with Uganda's Vision 2040 and the National Social Protection Policy, which recognises social protection as a critical pillar for human capital development, poverty

75%

**The percentage of
Uganda's 45 million
people who are
below 30 years
of age.**

reduction and inclusive growth. However, SPPU warned that despite policy progress, Uganda's social protection landscape is still characterised by significant gaps.

Uganda's population has surpassed 45 million, with over 75% under the age of 30, placing immense pressure on employment, incomes and social security systems.

According to the platform, between 70 and 75% of Uganda's workforce is engaged

in informal employment, where most workers lack access to contributory social security, employment injury protection, maternity benefits and old-age income security. Less than 10% of the labour force is covered by formal social security schemes, largely through the National Social Security Fund.

The SPPU further noted that more than 20% of Ugandans live below the national poverty line, while millions remain vulnerable to shocks such as illness, climate-related disasters and displacement.

Although programmes like the senior citizens' grant have improved household welfare, nutrition and access to health services, the scheme currently reaches only a fraction of older persons nationwide.

Public spending on social protection also remains below 1% of GDP, far lower than continental and global benchmarks required to deliver inclusive and comprehensive systems, the CSOs said.