**INPUT OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, NIGERIA ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AND INCLUSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION 49/20.**

**Introduction:**

Nigeria has frameworks that incorporate related social protection agenda, intended to reduce poverty, provide a life of dignity and ensure children’s access to welfare and inclusivity. This includes direct and indirect measures that support the children on social protection through policies, laws and programmes. Such measures are provided as answers to the questions below.

1. **What social protection systems are in place for children in your country? Please provide examples of specific laws and regulations, measures, policies, and programmes directed at ensuring children’s access to inclusive social protection and how these respect the rights of the child.**

The social protection systems which are in place in Nigeria include:

1. The laws that have been established in Nigeria to ensure that the rights of children are protected and promoted, such laws are:
* The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as amended, which provides the basis for the provision of social protection under Chapter 2, Section 16 & 17.
* The Child Rights Act, (CRA) 2003, which guarantees the rights of all children in Nigeria. So far 34 out of 36 states of Nigeria have adopted the CRA as state laws.
* The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act in 2003, leading to some progress in the fight against trafficking of children. This law enables the prosecution of alleged violators and awareness raising of trafficking of children.
* Universal Basic Education Act, 2004 which provides for free compulsory education at the basic level for all children in Nigeria.
1. Aside these laws, Nigeria has also created some policies such as:
* The National Social Protection Policy, which is a transformative tool for addressing poverty, unemployment, social and economic vulnerabilities, inequality, exclusion and other threats to sustainable development.
* Situation Analysis of Children in Nigeria (SiTAN) - this is a policy document prepared through a systematic collection and study pertaining to the child and demographic data in order to identify and understand specific child related issues to be addressed. It also underscores the budget lines for addressing them. The policy is being overseen and coordinated by the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning in Nigeria (FMFBNP).
1. The Nigeria Government has also created programmes that deal with social protection. These programmes include: National Health Insurance programmes, fee waivers for social services, school subsidies, school feeding programs, N-power job scheme, traders monies, cash transfers etc. All these empower parents/Guardians and to cater for children/wards.
2. **What are the main gaps and challenges to children’s enjoyment of social protection in law, policy, and practice in your country and the impacts on children’s rights? Please provide any relevant statistical or disaggregated data based on age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity, migration status, or other categories. Please consider the specific situation of marginalized children and those in vulnerable situations in your response.**

The main gaps and challenges to children’s enjoyment of social protection in law in Nigeria include:

* High rate of poverty in Nigeria which is currently at 0.257 indexes, with about 133 million poor people, 65% which translates to 86 million living in the Northern part of Nigeria, while 35% (47 million) live in the southern part.
* Low level of acceptance or adoption of laws and policies that protect the rights of the child, and a weak implementation of such laws in states where they have been adopted.
* Other challenges range from inequalities, food insecurity, national insecurity, labour market/unemployment facing children indirectly through their parents.
1. **What are the good practices initiated by the Government to ensure that social protection benefits the rights of children in your country?**

The Nigeria government has initiated some good practices to ensure social protection benefits. These practices include:

* Implementation of programmes like the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), N-Power Scheme, targeted at disability, ethnicity, religion, migration status and other categories. These programmes are coordinated by the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian, Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development.
* Creation of policy document such as the Situation Analysis of Children in Nigeria (SiTAN) and identify and address issues that borders on children.
* Provision of specific laws for example, Child Rights Act 2003, Tracking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act 2003, that establish and regulate institutions that deals with social protection and the rights of the child.
1. **Are there examples of how measures and responses to alleviate poverty through social protection systems in emergency situations or, for example, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, have positively affected children’s rights, particularly to social security?**

There are various measures and responses from the Nigerian government on alleviation of poverty through social protection systems, examples are:

* The setting up of an emergency committee by the President, Muhammad Buhari on the shock responsiveness of affected persons in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
* Establishment of social and economic policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic through: food assistance; cash transfers; Emergency Economic Stimulus Bill, 2020 to provide support to business and individual citizens of Nigeria; personal protective equipment such as facemasks and sanitizers.
* Provision of free routine drugs and medical care at various homes to prevent and protect people from being exposed to infection as well as routine health support for the hard-to-reach persons with sickle cells related challenges to alleviate financial burden on the affected persons and their breadwinners.
* Setting up of Volunteer Child Protection Officers and training of school teachers on child protection strategies in schools and communities by some CSOs.
1. **Can you provide information on any programs or activities your organization has implemented regarding inclusive social protection and the rights of the child?**

The National Human Rights commission in a bid to address social protection and the rights of the child has organised and participated in the following programmes/activities:

* The review and validation of a finalized policy document, ‘Situation Analysis of Children in Nigeria’ (SiTAN) which sets the foundation for appropriate and efficient financing and budgeting for protection across sectors that deals on the mandate of child rights. The document also prioritizes strategies by sectors to monitor and track projects with direct bearing on the lives of the children.
* The Commission also coordinated a national dialogue and conducted survey amongst stakeholders to elicit responses for a report by Nigeria at the United Nations report on COVID-19 and the realization of the SGDs and child rights by the Human Rights Council. This report was presented at the 2021 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.
* The Commission also spear headed the advocacy for the enactment of Child Rights Act, 2003 and its domestication at State levels.
* A project supporting National and State Coordination on Access to the Justice System for Survivors of Rape and Gender-Based Violence. This gave rise to the 2020/21 Panel on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) across the six geo-political zones in Nigeria as requested by the Federal Government and coordinated by the National Human Rights Commission. Compensation was awarded to victims which included children.
* The Commission furthermore issued Advisories to all State Governments during the CIVID-19 pandemic to protect the human rights of the Almajiri children and ensure their proper enrolment in schools during their repatriation to their various home-states.
* The Commission trained selected staff of the Commission on the Child Protection System to enhance documentation and case reporting.
1. **How can States deliver more effectively to ensure the effective implementation of universal social protection for children, including through international cooperation?**

States can ensure effective implementation of universal social protection through the following measures:

* Develop an overarching social protection policy framework to provide clear institutional roles and responsibility which guide social protection design and implementation at the federal and state levels.
* Allocate resources to scale up social protection programmes.
* Support and generate political commitment to social protection at the federal and state levels and ensure that social protection cuts across all facets of child welfare.
* Strengthen linkages to child protection across sectors and agencies, in particular Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and local government bodies for health, education, labour, police, justice and social welfare.
* Strengthen governance features on social protection programmes.
* Strengthen effective implementation of the Child Rights Laws, policies, guidelines and regulations to promote and protect child welfare.