

## **Communiqué of the International Conference on Child Poverty and Social Protection held from 23 to 25 May 2016 in Abuja, Nigeria**

The Participants to the meeting (consisting of academia, social policy advocates and practitioners) commend ECOWAS, UNICEF, CROP, Equity for Children, and ILO for successfully organizing the International Conference on Child Poverty and Social Protection. The participants stand resolute on our position that Child Poverty should be eradicated and Social Protection be provided to all children specifically in West and Central Africa;

The participants would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Federal Government of Nigeria for the hospitality extended to all the participants during their stay in the country. Our appreciation also goes to the CROP, ILO, UNICEF, Equity for Children and ECOWAS for the financial support provided to make this conference a reality.

### **The organizing institutions (ECOWAS, UNICEF, ILO, Equity for Children, and CROP),**

1. Note with satisfaction the presentations and fruitful discussions based on research work conducted on child poverty and social protection in West and Central Africa;
2. Recognize that economic growth does not automatically translate into improvements for the population; thus, child poverty and social protection remain critical and need to be addressed in a holistic and integrated manner;
3. Unanimously note with deep concern that children in the region and especially the girl child continue to suffer several deprivations that affect their lives, imperil their wellbeing, and consequently will surely impact the region's future human capital and hence its prospect of sustainable development if nothing is done to halt it;
4. Take note of the seriousness of child poverty with a special attention to girl child poverty in West and Central Africa even in countries classified as middle income countries;
5. Mindful that without a conducive environment in which children's needs are properly catered for, the future of the region could be jeopardized, for the simple reason that today's children are tomorrow's leaders;
6. Based on the above and on the studies presented at the workshop showing the proven feasibility of taking the following steps;
7. Recommend that in order to design, implement, and evaluate policies to eliminate child poverty, it be measured routinely, combining the use of census and household surveys to disaggregate along geographic, gender, and socio-economic axes of disparities
8. Recommend the schedule of population censuses be adhered to in all countries;
9. Recommend that in order to contribute to tracking the SDGs, child poverty be estimated using a multi-dimensional perspective and rights-based approach, that monetary measures of poverty be disaggregated by age, and that the two measures be presented in simple ways to be understood by wide-audiences, including civil society organizations and policy-makers;
10. Recommend Policy makers of West and Central Africa to endeavor to design and implement policies targeting the eradication of child poverty and providing social

protection for all in West and Central Africa. These policies should be clearly spelled out in the vision and strategic documents of the region;

11. Recommend the widespread sharing of knowledge, efforts and resources within the region, development partners and the scientific community to develop the capacities of countries to monitor and evaluate the impacts of policy implementation on the eradication of child poverty and the extent of social protection coverage in West and Central Africa;
12. Recommend that social protection policies be based on the Social Protection Floor framework, which has been estimated to be affordable for all countries, even in low income ones;
13. Recommend that Social Protection be considered as more than small-scale anti-poverty programmes;
14. Recommend that Social Protection be based on principles of non-discrimination and universality with due consideration of progressive realization when resources are constrained in the short run;
15. Recommend that development partners consider their role and commitments vis-à-vis contributing to the well-being of the populations in poorer countries as well as their duty and obligation in terms of realizing the rights of children in these countries;
16. Encourage collaboration between Member States and the wider development community in addressing child poverty and social protection in a coordinated manner, even in countries with relatively higher per capita income but with lagging social development.
17. Express our deep appreciation once again to the stakeholders who made this conference a reality i.e. The Federal Government of Nigeria, ECOWAS, UNICEF, CROP, Equity for Children, and ILO.

Done on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of May 2016, Abuja, Nigeria