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An Exploration of the Key Options of Social Protection Instruments on Poverty Alleviation in Zimbabwe

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Abstract: The current desk research explored the available options of social protection on poverty alleviation in Zimbabwe. The country's experience of social protection has been diverse and most of the debate has focused on expanding coverage and identifying more sources of finance in order to fight poverty. The social protection strategies available in Zimbabwe included labour market policies and programmes, social insurance programmes, social assistance and welfare service programmes, cash transfers, transformative and advocacy programmes, humanitarian aid in response to crises, micro and area-based schemes to address vulnerability at the community level, child protection to ensure the healthy and productive development of children and other instruments such as insurance, livestock and fee waivers. Although the country has institutionalized social protection system, some of the programmes were ineffective due to a number of factors including limited fiscal space; limited coverage, serving only the formal sector; inappropriate instruments, often copied from developed countries (but not appropriate to serve Zimbabwe's in-country needs); poor and antiquated infrastructure; widening inequality and exclusion of some marginalized groups; legal restrictions and partial or non-alignment of major laws and policies with the new constitution adopted in 2013; limited human resource capacity; poor retention of skilled labour and administrative bottlenecks and problems of compliance. Due to prolonged economic stagnation and high levels of unemployment, Zimbabwe needs substantial investments in social protection system in order to overcome poverty and reduce social risk and vulnerability. This requires smart partnership between the government and aid organizations and active community involvement.
Keywords: Social protection, poverty, social risk, vulnerability, desk research.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty can be measured using consumption, income or access to service levels for households and/or communities [1]. The most commonly used poverty measure is the headcount index or share of the population whose income or consumption is below the poverty line. According to Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, Zimbabwe's poverty datum line stood at between US$430 and US$574 for an average household of five and US$96 for a self-sustaining individual depending on location while the headcount ratio or index stood at 72.3 percent in 2012. People living below the poverty datum line are highly vulnerable to various forms of risks that plunge them into chronic poverty. The four major types of risks to the poor include those related to the individual life cycle, for example, disability, old age, injury, illness including HIV and AIDS and death; economic downturn, for example, unemployment, low incomes, changes in prices and end of sources of livelihood; environmental risks, for example, droughts and floods; and social/governance related risks for example, exclusion, corruption, crime, domestic violence and political instability. Developmental interventions may themselves create new vulnerability and risks through involuntary effects such as less affordable goods and services, temporary job loss, loss of common property, displacement and loss of community support networks and social capital [2]. Social protection, whose aim is to assist individuals, households and/or communities to better manage risks that leave people vulnerable and in transient and/or perpetual poverty, is one of the key pillars of Poverty Reduction Strategy adopted by many developing countries. Inadequate or underdeveloped social protection systems expose both working and non-working populations to some of the above-listed risks and increase the incidence of poverty in the country.

There are different conceptions of social protection and the debate is ongoing on what interventions constitute social protection. Generally, social protection is concerned with protecting and helping those who are poor and vulnerable, such as children, women, older people, people living with disabilities, the displaced, the unemployed and the sick. Norton, Conway and Foster defined social protection as public actions taken in response to levels of vulnerability, risk and deprivation which are deemed socially acceptable within a given polity or society [3]. Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler are more elaborate and define social protection as all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized; with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social vulnerability of poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups [4]. These two definitions are in line with usage in international development. Social protection is usually provided by the state; it is theoretically conceived as part of the 'state-citizen' contract, in which states and citizens have rights and responsibilities to each other [5].

The first state-provided social protection can be traced to the Roman Emperor Trajan, who provided free grain to poor citizens and instituted public funds to support poor children. According to BBC, organized welfare targeting working classes was established in Germany and Britain in the early 20th century [6]. The United States of America first provided emergency relief during the Great Depression of 1930s. Modern social protection has evolved to include a much broader range of issues and purposes. For example, it is now being used as a policy approach in developing countries to address issues of persistent poverty and target economic structural bottlenecks. Developed countries have developed sophisticated institutional arrangements in order to protect against their citizen risk and provide assistance to the destitute. Meanwhile in a majority of developing countries, social protection has suffered a benign neglect due to a combination of factors including constrained fiscal space, inappropriate social protection intervention tools, inadequate policies and legislation and lack of effective and meaningful collaboration among government departments and civil society organizations. The majority of the population in developing countries is not covered by any form of statutory social protection either insurance or non-insurance based due to large proportions of populations living in rural areas and high unemployment levels.

According to Norton *et al.*, social protection is argued to be necessary in order to:

- Develop social support for reform programmes
- Promote social justice and equity – and make growth more efficient and equitable
- Provide policy-led support to those outside the labour market/with insufficient assets to achieve a secure livelihood
- Provide protection for all citizens against risk (including financial crises)
- Ensure basic acceptable livelihood standards for all
- Facilitate investment in human capital for poor households and communities
- Enable people to take economic risks to pursue livelihoods
- Promote social cohesion and social solidarity (social stability)
- Compensate for declining effectiveness of traditional and informal systems for enhancing livelihood security
- Ensure continuity of access for all to the basic services necessary for developing human capital and meeting basic needs [3].

Conceptual framework of social protection

Social protection has a wide range of objectives and impacts including food security, access to services, gender equality and state building and social transformation though the emphasis in developing countries is poverty and vulnerability reduction. There are several different conceptual approaches that can be used to analyse social protection objectives and impacts in developing countries. Each framework conceptualizes potential impacts in different ways: transformation; human capital; vulnerability; and human rights [7]. Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler provide the most commonly used conceptual framework, which describes four social protection functions [4]:

- **Protective:** providing relief from deprivation (for example, income benefits, state pensions)
- **Preventative**: averting deprivation (for example, savings clubs, social insurance)
- **Promotive**: enhancing incomes and capabilities (for example, inputs)
- **Transformative**: social equity and inclusion, empowerment and rights (for example, labour laws)

According to Browne, the first three functions (the three Ps in the PPP+T framework) were originally conceptualised by the International Labour Organisation while the transformative element seeks to transform lives, through pursuing policies that rebalance the unequal power relations which cause vulnerabilities [7]. Barrientos argues that most social protection frameworks conceptualise social protection as an investment in human capital which increases capacities and the accumulation of productive assets (breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty) [8]. Another common theory is that social protection reduces vulnerability and risk by providing protection against shocks [7]. This assumes that vulnerability to hazards constrains human and economic development [9] and that risk management stabilises income and consumption and is an investment in poverty reduction [4]. The conceptual framework by Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler seems comprehensive enough to cover all the available options of social protection in Zimbabwe and was accordingly adopted for the current study.

Schools of thought on social protection

There are two main schools of thought concerning the scope of social protection, namely, universalism and targeting. Universalism argues that each person, by merit of simply being a citizen should be entitled to benefits from social protection programmes. This policy does not require means-testing and any conditionality's such as work requirements for one to access social protection. One of the greatest benefits to this policy perspective is social solidarity and social security is one such example. Economists argue that universalism is an investment in human capital that aids the development of a nation as a whole [10]. Opponents argue that universalism is cost-ineffective and unfairly distorts individual efforts and therefore propose targeting as a better solution [11]. Van Domelen identified a variety of reasons why governments may seek to target resources to poor communities [1]. These reasons included the need to maximise impact on key development indicators or to optimise resource expenditures in the face of budget constraints; to solidify nation-building and ease regional or intra-ethnic tensions; to serve political objectives, especially in democracies where delivering services to the poor and vulnerable are typically a strong part of electoral promises and may be related to both economic growth and equity objectives. In such a case however, the question arises of who should be the target population that receives benefits from social programmes.

Although net income is the simplest method of determining a needy population, Sen [11-13] and the proponents of his capabilities approach such as Nussbaum [14] and Ocampo [15] argue that income is easier to misrepresent and moreover, fails to target the root causal factors of poverty. Hence, they recommend targeting a minimum level of basic capabilities that will impact quality of life, such as institutional improvements like health and education. Proponents of targeting such as Barrientos and Hulme [9], Devereux [16] and Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler [4] argue that effective targeting makes sure that scarce resources go to those who need them most. However, no targeting process is perfect and costless. Targeting is associated with both inclusion and exclusion errors; administrative costs; private costs that accrue to potential beneficiaries for example, transport costs to apply for benefits, time expended in queues and fees for obtaining the necessary documentation and social costs associated with stigmatisation, possible deterioration of community cohesiveness and potential erosion of informal support networks [1].

Means of providing social protection

Social protection has three basic sources of financing, namely, government (through national taxes), development assistance (using country systems which can mean funding through general and sector budget support) and household (through out of pocket expenses paid by service users). Browne citing Hanlon *et al*., [25] observed that since few people in developing countries are in formal-sector employment, tax funding tends to come from indirect or consumption taxes [7]. Meanwhile, Arnold *et al.*, [26] cited in Browne stated that the potential cost of a package of basic social protection ranges between 2.2 and 5.7 percent of gross domestic product [7].

Notwithstanding the costs and challenges associated with social protection delivery, developing countries and their development partners have come up with strategies on how best to implement programmes that effectively aid the people who need it the most. These policies and instruments vary according to country context as shown in Table-1.

Table-1: Mechanisms of providing social protection

Mechanism	Description
Developmentalism model	Social protection is seen as a tool to promote economic growth and development e.g. South Korea and Taiwan.
Dualism model	State-provides protection for those who work in the formal sector, but little to no protection for those who work in the informal sector e.g. Argentina, Brazil And South Africa.
Agrarian-Informal Model	Governments struggle to provide adequate social protection and the poor and vulnerable groups depend on non-state actors (NGOs and individual philanthropists) and informal provisioning e.g. India, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.
Donor Models	International donors and organizations have influenced social protection approaches both at the level of policy discourse and programme Design and implementation. For example, the World Bank uses Social Risk Management framework which includes interventions that focus on managing risks before shocks occur; OECD developed Poverty Network that focuses on poverty reduction, pro-poor growth, people-centred development and decent work while the International Labour Organisation covers issues of social security and labour protection.

Sources: [11, 15-20]

Given the above background, the aim of the current study was to explore the available social protection options on poverty alleviation in Zimbabwe. The paper's contribution is to provide a broad framework that can be used to understand social protection and provide guidelines on policy implementation.

Research Questions

- How can the forms of social protection be categorised?
- What are the social protection strategies in Zimbabwe?
- What are the effects of social protection in Zimbabwe?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Literature review on social protection strategies in Zimbabwe was used to address the research problem. The study used archival data and document reviews and was not based on any field research. The analysis was based on social protection systems available in Zimbabwe. The study is more of an analytical contribution to the debate on social protection rather than anything definitive. There is need for further research focused on gathering field-based evidence on the effectiveness of the different options of social protection in Zimbabwe.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion of research findings of the current study is organised into three sections. The categories of social protection are presented in section 3.1 while section 3.2 provides the available options of social protection in Zimbabwe. Section 3.3 presents possible effects of social protection.

Categories of social protection

Social protection instruments may be grouped under six headings, social assistance, social insurance, labour market interventions, traditional or informal social protection, child protection and 'other' forms of social protection instruments.

Social Assistance

This is the primary form of social protection available in most developing countries [8]. Social assistance is tax-financed direct, regular and predictable cash or in-kind resources transfers to poor and vulnerable individuals (or households) for example, old age and disabled usually provided by the state [10]. Support from donors complements state contributions in most developing countries. Transfers are non-contributory, that is, the full amount is paid by the provider. Cash transfers are direct, regular and predictable transfers that raise and smooth incomes to reduce poverty and vulnerability [7]. Unconditional cash transfers are for the beneficiary to decide how to spend. Conditional cash transfers are given with the requirement that the beneficiary meets certain conditions often related to human capital development, such as visiting a health clinic or ensuring children go to school [7]. Meanwhile, in-kind transfers are economic and livelihood asset transfers to households, facilitating income generation. They tend to be larger, one-off transfers but can also be smaller, regular transfers, such as food transfers. They tend to take an integrated approach, linking the transfer with skills training and other activities [21]. Some are targeted based on categories of vulnerability and some are targeted broadly to low-income groups. Social pensions are state pensions, a form of cash transfer targeted by age. Pensions are the most common social protection tool, with the widest global coverage and often highest national spend.

Social assistance may also be used as a means to other social policy ends (in-kind assistance) such as the provision of free nutritious meals at schools or take home rations for children in order to encourage poor families to keep their children (and especially girls) in education. Many forms of social assistance in developing countries have a problematic record due to deficiencies not just in financial resources but also in the institutional capacity and accountability necessary to deliver scarce resources to the poor and vulnerable groups [3]. Attempts to operate exemptions to cost-recovery policies in the delivery of health services have a particularly unsatisfactory record when such exemptions have been based on supposedly means-tested poverty criteria although they can be more effective when applied to age groups or other easily identifiable social categories [3].

Social insurance

Social insurance is social security and is a set of insurance-based policies and programmes. The essence of insurance is the elimination of the uncertain risk of loss for the individual or household by combining a larger number of similarly exposed individuals into a common fund or pool that makes good the loss caused to any one member. Barrientos defines social insurance as contributory programmes where participants make regular payments to a scheme that will cover costs related to life-course events, for example, maternity, unemployment or illness. Sometimes costs are matched or subsidised by the scheme provider [8]. Social insurance includes contributory pensions; health, unemployment, or disaster insurance; and funeral assistance [3]. It can be provided formally through a bank or employer or informally through a community-based pooled fund. Social insurance is strongly linked to the formal labour market, meaning coverage is often limited to formal workers.

Labour market interventions

Labour market interventions provide protection for poor people who are able to work and aim to ensure basic standards and rights [8]. They come in different forms depending on their function. First, labour market interventions can be active or passive:

- Active labour market policies aim to help the unemployed and the most vulnerable find jobs, through interventions such as job centres, vocational and agricultural training and policies to promote small and medium-sized enterprises through microcredit.

- Passive interventions include maternity benefits, injury compensation and sickness benefits for those already in work financed by the employer. Passive interventions also include changes to legislation, for example establishing a minimum wage or safe working conditions. Passive interventions target workers in the formal sector. Many poor people work within the informal sector and some people with disabilities, the chronically ill and old may not be able to work at all, so passive labour market interventions cannot always reach them.

Another form of labour market interventions are public works programmes (or public employment programmes) that provide jobs on infrastructure projects for cash or food. That is, public works programmes are only classified as labour market interventions if their primary function is poverty alleviation, job creation or social protection. Food-for-work schemes are public works programmes where the participants are given food and are usually undertaken during periods of lean yields and droughts. They are politically popular although arguably inefficient [3].

Traditional or informal social protection

Informal social protection or micro and area-based schemes seek to protect local communities such as small scale agriculture and urban informal sector. Formal social protection systems do not offer complete coverage and inevitably exclude parts of the population especially the poor and vulnerable groups and the informal sector. Traditional community-based forms of social protection distribute risk within a community and fill some of the gaps left by formal interventions [3]. Microinsurance offers the option to insure the poor against their main risks at affordable premiums. They are often self-funded, for example funeral insurance savings groups (or burial societies), agricultural insurance, social funds and disaster preparedness and management, but can be externally funded by the state or donors. Formal social protection should be carefully managed to enhance, rather than disrupt, existing informal systems [5].

Child protection

Children and the youth constitute a significant proportion of the world population and consequently investing in child protection becomes of profound significance to the development of any country. Some scholars classify child protection under social assistance which unfortunately conceals. The Asian Development Bank observed that high child/adult dependency ratios indicate the need to provide social protection for the young including [2]:

- Early child development to ensure the balanced psychomotive development of the child through basic nutrition, preventive health, and educational programmes;
- School feeding programmes, scholarships or school fee waivers;
- Waiving of fees for mothers and children in health services;
- Street children initiatives;
- Child rights advocacy/awareness programmes against child abuse, child labour etc.;
- Youth programmes to avoid social anomia in teenagers, criminality, sexually transmitted diseases such as hiv and aids, early pregnancies and drug addiction; and
- Family allowances, either means-tested cash transfers or coupons/stamps for basic goods and services (i.e. Food, clothing) to assist families with young children to meet part of their basic needs.

Other types of social protection

Social care and support is highly complementary to social protection and sometimes considered to be social protection, as a form of social assistance. UNICEF recognises that social support helps address the interaction between social and economic vulnerability, through services such as home-based care and family support services [22].

Government or private sector subsidies are sometimes classified as social protection if they enhance access for the poor or act as safety nets. Subsidies can keep prices low for basic goods and services consumed by the poor [3]. However, subsidies are often regressive. The Middle East and North Africa spend four per cent of GDP on fuel subsidies, which represents a form of social assistance, but most of the benefit goes to upper-income groups [23].

Price support is state intervention to protect market prices for the goods produced by the poor, which can smooth income. There is a tendency for these temporary measures to become permanent, which institutionalises unprofitable production [3].

Transformative schemes that address social inequity and exclusion that are undertaken through awareness campaigns, psychosocial support and therapy and policies and laws in order to protect orphans and vulnerable children, for example protection of inheritance rights.

Social protection strategies in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe, like many other developing countries, has large proportions of rural population living in poverty. Due to constrained fiscal space, state-funded social protection schemes exist only nominally and are in the main supplemented by programmes operated by non-governmental organisations. Investments in social protection systems should target the poorer communities, children and the youth, vulnerable groups and those in the informal sector, improve governance and promote institutional development. This is because, during the economic crisis, 2001-2008 and 2013-2017, the government reduced expenditure on social protection schemes and the effect has been to increase poverty, insecurity and social exclusion of many vulnerable groups. Meanwhile, the formal sector has become limited and social protection systems only reach a small proportion of the population. That is, social protection becomes a key step in Zimbabwe's battle to free the country of poverty. The Social Protection Strategy spells out the scope of social protection and commitment of the government. Table-3 summarises the social protection priority issues in Zimbabwe:

Table-2: Social protection options in Zimbabwe

Social Protection Strategy	**Description and Examples**
Labour market programmes	Labour market policies and programmes designed to generate employment (public works programmes), facilitate labour exchanges, improve working conditions (standards), training and promote the efficient operations.
Social insurance	Programmes to cushion the risks associated with unemployment, ill health, disability, work-related injury, death, old age, sickness and maternity. This is a compulsory national social security pension which is provided by the National Social Security Authority (NSSA), a body corporate established by an Act of Parliament in 1989 to administer social security schemes in Zimbabwe. NSSA started in 1994 with two schemes that cover members in the formal employment. The National Pension Scheme (NPS) is based on 50/50 contribution from the employers and employees while the Workers Compensation Insurance Fund (WCIF) or The Accident Prevention Scheme requires all employers except government, domestic workers and informal sector employers to contribute to the Scheme.
Social assistance	Social assistance and welfare service programmes for the vulnerable groups with inadequate means of support, including single mothers, the homeless or physically or mentally challenged people. In 2017 the Government introduced a waiver of health fees for children under five years, senior citizens above age 65 years and pregnant women (including maternity fees).
Micro and area-based schemes	These are programmes to address vulnerability at the community level, including micro-insurance, agricultural insurance (both crop and animal), social funds and programmes to manage natural disasters.
Child protection	These are schemes to ensure the healthy and productive development of children and include family allowances. Examples are fee waivers on health and education for example, Basic Education Assistance Module and school feeding programmes and child/orphan grants. For example, under the Protracted Relief Programme, DFID's block grants were provided to schools in exchange for fee waivers for orphans and vulnerable children, home-based care savings and loans and a range of water and sanitation interventions. Some donors, such as USA, Australia, Japan, UK and Canada have developed scholarships programmes to assist disadvantaged children to access higher and tertiary education.
Informal social protection	Largely undocumented and impact not measurable for example, extended family and 'adoption'.
Transformative	Particularly important since rights can be abused due to fragility of state. They include advocacy, sensitisation and rights campaigns.
Humanitarian aid	Largely delivered outside the state by international aid agencies, for example, World Food Programme in the form of food aid and seed distributions as part of emergency appeals. Donors were not willing to work with the government of the day (Mugabe era) because of political differences. In 2008, various donors through UNICEF initiated water and sanitation programmes following the choleracrisis. The humanitarian response was later developed into a long-term initiative to develop water and sanitation infrastructure in towns and rural areas.
Cash Transfers	These are direct, regular and predictable transfers that raise and smooth incomes to reduce poverty and vulnerability [7]. Used in both emergency relief and longer term social protection [5]. Cash has been used mainly to buy food and sometimes livestock. For example, in Masvingo, Chivi District, Caritas Zimbabwe provided beneficiaries with food vouchers redeemable at designated rural grocery shops while World Vision made cash disbursements to beneficiaries in order to buy food in Guruve District in Mashonaland Central Province. Meanwhile, the Government of Zimbabwe, through its social welfare also made cash disbursements to the poor and vulnerable individuals and households.
Other instruments-insurance, livestock and fee waivers	Agricultural interventions focus on agricultural production in rural areas where agriculture-based livelihoods support a majority of the population. Interventions include seed distributions and cash support investment infrastructure, for example, irrigation and feeder roads. DFID-funded Protracted Relief Programme has particular focus on agricultural support interventions to support livelihoods through targeted inputs (seeds, fertiliser, small livestock) and livelihoods development focused interventions (conservation farming, seed multiplication, nutrition gardens and training)

Three major categories of the sources of financing can be identified for the above options of social protection in Zimbabwe:

Government
Most social protection is funded by national taxes, often with some support from donors. Since very few people are in the formal-sector employment (less than 15 percent), tax funding tends to come from indirect or consumption taxes such as value added tax. Meanwhile, governments can support social protection programmes by reallocating expenditure; obtaining aid grants; or borrowing or they can support social protection more generally through macroeconomic policy; public expenditure; tax policy; and regulation [7].

Development assistance
This comes through various international aid organisations. Funding is done through general and sector budget support. Budget support can enable linkages across sectors and is more flexible than structural adjustment or programme-specific funding [7]. Donors are not always able to commit to a medium or long-term timeframe, so partnership with government may be the best approach, where donors provide start-up funds and governments gradually take over the programme [7].

Households
Given that the majority of the population in Zimbabwe is in the informal sector, households become a significant source of social protection financing through out-of-pocket expenses especially for health services. Browne citing Barrientos [9], noted that people may choose between a number of options for financing social protection: investment in human capital (self-protection); savings; and insurance [7]. Micro-savings may be an appropriate way to self-fund as they are effective in small losses-high frequency contingencies although, if micro-finance institutions make savings compulsory and discourage easy access to withdrawals, they may provide only limited social protection [7].

Various studies are in agreement that a mix of financing sources is more sustainable than donor funding alone. Unfortunately, a majority of the developing countries abdicate social protection financing to international aid organisations. Promoting employment generating private sector investment and improving the efficiency of the tax system are the most important initiatives of expanding government social spending. Browne citing Garcia and Moore [27] observed that donor funding is less predictable, long-term and sustainable than domestic financing and that domestic resource mobilisation should be the priority to the government [7]. Although Zimbabwe has institutionalised social protection system, some of programmes are ineffective due to a number of factors including, constrained fiscal space caused by prolonged economic stagnation; limited coverage, serving only the formal sector; inappropriate instruments, often copied from developed countries (but not appropriate to serve Zimbabwe's in-country needs); poor and antiquated infrastructure, widening inequality and exclusion of some marginalised groups; limited human resource capacity and administrative bottlenecks and problems of compliance. In some cases, political interference has been identified as the major factor affecting social protection programmes.

Possible effects of social protection in Zimbabwe
The primary aim of social protection programmes is to reduce poverty and vulnerability. Social protection has both positive and negative effects at all the three levels of social organisation, namely, national, community and household levels [24]. At the national level, social protection enables governments to embrace reforms and stimulate aggregate demand. Social protection creates productive assets, improves functioning of labour markets and creates spillovers from increased demand at the community level. At the household level, social protection fosters accumulation of assets, increases entrepreneurial activity and increases/preserves human capital. For example, through cash transfers from international aid organisations, some rural households were able to buy small livestock such as goats and chicken.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
According to Norton *et al*, social protection is an integral component of any strategic effort to reduce the incidence and severity of poverty [3]. As such, it relates to a large body of literature on the definition, explanation and identification of the poor and conversely, to decades of theoretical and empirical work on what contributes to sustainable poverty-reduction. Zimbabwe's experience of social protection has been diverse and most of the debate has focused on expanding coverage and identifying more sources of finance in order to fight poverty. There are five distinct groups of social protection that include, social assistance, social insurance, labour market interventions, traditional or informal social protection and 'other' instruments and all of these are visible in Zimbabwe. The Social Protection Strategy spells out the scope of social protection and commitment of the government. More specifically, the social protection strategies adopted by the Government of Zimbabwe and its development partners included labour market policies and programmes, social insurance programmes, social assistance and welfare service programmes, cash transfers, transformative and advocacy programmes, humanitarian aid in response to crises, micro and area-based schemes to address vulnerability at the community level, child protection to ensure the healthy and productive development of children and other instruments such as insurance, livestock and fee waivers. Although the country has institutionalised

social protection system, some of these programmes are ineffective due to a number of factors. These factors include limited fiscal space; limited coverage, serving only the formal sector; inappropriate instruments, often copied from developed countries (but not appropriate to serve Zimbabwe's in-country needs); after effects of prolonged economic stagnation; poor and antiquated infrastructure, widening inequality and exclusion of some marginalised groups; legal restrictions and partial or non-alignment of major laws and policies with the new constitution adopted in 2013; limited human resource capacity; poor retention of skilled labour and administrative bottlenecks and problems of compliance. Zimbabwe needs substantial investments in social protection system in order to overcome poverty and reduce social risk and vulnerability. The following recommendations are made in order to make social protection delivery more effective and efficient:

- Sound macroeconomic and sector policies to promote economic opportunities.
- Promoting employment generating private sector investment.
- Smart partnership between the government and international aid organisations.
- Capacity building of government ministries and departments handling social protection.
- Catastrophe prevention and mitigation programmes including agricultural (livestock and crop) insurance and reinsurance.
- Active community involvement

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