**PASGR to lead in discussion at the Inclusive and Just Social Protection in Africa (IJSPA) Conference 2021**

For immediate release

**Nairobi, August 24 - What is the future of Social Protection in Africa? Why do issues such as limited coverage, inequity, and fragmentation persist? Will the African Union achieve its Agenda 2063 target of increasing contributory social security benefits to cover households in the informal economy and rural sector?**

These are some of the big issues to be explored at the Inclusive & Just Social Protection in Africa (IJSPA) Conference 2021 in Nairobi, Kenya, 26th to 27th August. IJSPA 2021 will be a hybrid event set to run both physically and virtually and not only offers a unique platform to discuss evidence of social protection measures collected from around Africa, but also how to foster a constructive environment, leveraging on the voices and representation of all actors. The Conference is organised by the Partnership for African Social & Governance Research (PASGR) in collaboration with the Africa Platform for Social Protection (APSP) and the Open Society Foundation. With more than 1,000 stakeholders to include beneficiaries, grass-roots leaders, non-state actors, and policymakers, IJSPA 2021 will be a fruit bowl of salient conversations on innovation, inclusive and Afrocentric Social Protection in Africa.

Kenya’s Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Hon. CS Simon Kiprono Chelugui will deliver the key note address on 26th August. Prof. Narcis Matos, the Chair of PASGR’s Board of Directors will speak to the place of rigorous African led evidence generation to inform policy making in Africa to solve African problemsDr. Anthony Mveyange, the Executive Director of PASGR will articulate the need for sustained dialogue and engagement in addressing African policy challenges. Apart from experts from PASGR, other Notable names that will talk Social Protection at IJSPA 2021 include: Dr. Thomas Ongolo of the African Union Commission, Hon. Wachira Kabinga, Chairperson Kenya Parliament Committee on labour and social welfare, Professor Winnie Mitullah of University of Nairobi, Ebenezer Sorsey, Head HelpAge Ghana, Dr. Daniel Doh, Western Sydney University, Professor Wole Oni, University of Ibadan, Dr. Mary Mangai, University of Pretoria and Rebecca Ssanyu, Dawda Samba, Dr.Ide Djermakoye, Simon Nhongo and Dr. Imed Chaker from APSP.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a natural experiment for critically reviewing the place and purpose of Social Protection interventions in Africa and indeed across the world. The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the cracks that already existed for those in society on the margins of poverty. Access to food, loss of jobs, access to healthcare – all divided on socio economic lines. The dire need for sustainable robust interventions to provide firmly hold and raise those vulnerable in society is not only an African debate but a global one.

As a result of the pandemic, it is estimated that unemployment rates in the continent have increased by 0.7% resulting in about 40 million “newly” poor Africans, and eroding the progress of poverty reduction across the continent.

It is widely acknowledged in policy, practice and research that poverty goes beyond the lack of economic opportunities. It is also a depravation of social opportunities bringing the question of dignity and rights.

With the right design, strategies, funding and political will, Social protection has the potential of transforming the economic realities in Africa by providing a solid safety net ground for those vulnerable to build up from.

“This conference is the right and timely platform to have constructive and productive conversations around social protection in Africa. We want to spur and spice up conversation of African-centric solutions and innovations.” Dr. Anthony Mveyange

At the end of the two half days convening, IJSPA 2021 seeks to: Articulate the “post COVID-19 Social Protection agenda for Africa; deepened trust and common understanding of the social protection agenda for Africa among both state and non-state actors; and identified strategic follow-up actions to see to the implementation of the post COVID-19 Social Protection Agenda for Africa.

**The Inclusive & Just Social Protection in Africa (IJSPA) Conference 2021**
**Where:** The Tamarind Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya.

Virtually: Zoom
**When:** 26th to 27th August 2021
**Media are invited to the opening of IJSPA on Thursday 26th**

**09:00am**Opening launch**: Conference Hall, Tamarind Hotel**

**09:50am** Opening Media Brunch and Press Conference: PASGR Lounge, Tamarind Hotel

If you haven’t already, we encourage you to register for IJSPA 2021 at <https://bit.ly/3j4H2rR>

**NOTE TO EDITORS**

**About Partnership for African Social & Governance Research (PASGR)**

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) is an independent, non-partisan pan-African not-for-profit organisation established in 2011 and located in Nairobi, Kenya.  Currently engaged in more than 12 African countries, PASGR works to enhance research excellence in governance and public policy that contributes to the overall wellbeing of women and men.

In partnership with individual academics and researchers, higher education institutions, research think tanks, civil society organisations, business, and policy communities both in the region and internationally, PASGR supports the production and dissemination of policy relevant research; designs and delivers suites of short professional development courses for researchers and policy actors; and facilitates the development of collaborative higher education programmes.

**About the** **African Platform for Social Protection**
The Africa Platform for Social Protection (APSP) is a pan African network of organizations operating at grassroots, national and regional levels, with a commitment to promoting and strengthening the social contract between states and citizens. To achieve this, the APSP promotes active engagement of National Platforms in the shaping of Social Protection policies, programs, and practices in Africa. APSP has established 27 platforms to engage at the national level.

**About Open Society Foundations**

The Open Society Foundations are active in more than 120 countries around the world. The OSF national and regional foundations and thematic programs give thousands of grants every year towards building inclusive and vibrant democracies. OSF’s vision is a call for change—change in the way we think about others, and in the ways, we work together—changes now more pressing than ever amid the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.