

CONCEPT NOTE

Title: Independence, Autonomy and Rights of Older Persons in the African Context

Background:

Africa is experiencing the highest increase in the number of older persons. In 2017, Africa was home to 69 million older persons accounting for 7.1% of global population of older persons. With a projected 229% increase between 2017 and 2050, this figure is projected to reach 226 million in 2050 and may account for 10.9 % of people over the age of 60 years old globally (UNDESA 2017). These striking demographic trends raise increasing concerns about wellbeing and protection of rights of older persons.

SDGs Agenda 2030 and African Union Agenda 2063 which set out universal plans for people of all ages and seek to realize the human rights of all people including older persons, provide African member States, the path towards fostering inclusive development. In recent years for instance, more African countries have adopted policies to provide protection for multiple contingencies; social protection and social security have gained increased interest. Reforming health and insurance systems to reach individuals in the informal sector have become a priority. Despite general progress, the envisioned inclusiveness of older persons remains a challenge.

In their diversities and different capacities, older persons across the fifty-four African member states face varying age specific challenges in the enjoyment of their human rights in a wide range of areas including health, long term and palliative care, health support services, protection against violence and abuse, social protection, food security and living arrangements, financial services, occupational opportunities and access to markets. Older persons experience barriers in the areas of access to justice, education, training and lifelong learning. Older persons with disabilities and in humanitarian crises receive insufficient attention and some are left behind by first responders in emergency evacuations. Older women face cultural and gender challenges and liberty to participation in communities' social economic and cultural affairs are breached.

Policies and programmatic interventions are so far not adequate to enable economic, social and functional resilience in later life for Africa's ageing population and to address age specific multi-level and intersecting discrimination and inequalities faced in old age. Legal, policy and programmatic provisions for best practice are increasingly challenged by ageism and the realities of long-term care. To a great extent, older persons' rights to self-determination and their ability to effectively take decisions that affect them without undue influence, which are inherent in human dignity, are marginalized by multi-dimensional and crosscutting systemic drivers of vulnerabilities.



Stakeholder Group on Ageing Africa (SGA Africa) Side Event
10th United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing New York
15-18 April 2019

Objectives:

- i) Facilitate interaction between Africa Member States, UNDESA, National Human Rights Institutions and diverse stakeholders on the rights of older persons to independence and autonomy in Africa
- ii) Enhance understanding of systemic drivers of older persons' vulnerabilities in Africa and their effect on older persons' autonomy and independence
- iii) Highlight the importance of legislative opportunities for reforms towards empowerment of older persons and strengthening their rights
- iv) Galvanize support for the UN Convention on the Rights of Older persons among the African Group and enhance integration of older people in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of SDGs Agenda 2030 and African Union Agenda 2063.

For more information about SGA-Africa please contact the SGA Africa Co-Chairs:

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