Communique’

Stakeholder Group on Ageing Africa

1st Annual Africa Regional Conference on Ageing

Ladi Kwall, Hall Sheraton Abuja Hotel

5th-7th November 2018

Overview

The Stakeholder Group on Ageing Africa (SGA – Africa) is an African regional coalition of organizations that brings together civil societies, professional bodies, private sector, human rights institutions, academia, individuals, older persons and organizations representing older persons who will engage the Africa Forum for Sustainable Development, Major Groups and Other Stakeholders Coordination Mechanism. SGA Africa will also work in tandem with global older persons’ movements such as Stakeholder Group on Ageing (SGA) engaging the New York High Level Political Forum, Major Groups and Other Stakeholder Coordination Mechanism; and the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older Persons (GAROP) engaging the UN Open Ended Working Group on Ageing leading the discussions on a new UN convention for the rights of older persons. The SGA-Africa will focus on combating age discrimination and promoting age-inclusion in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa Union Agenda 2063. Its vision is **an Africa for all ages in which older persons fully enjoy their rights and attain their full potentials.**

The SGA-Africa was launched in Abuja between 5th and 7th November 2018, its First Annual African Regional Conference on Ageing with the theme, “New Consensuses for Innovative Multi-Level Engagements” and brought together 300 stakeholders united to strengthen and promote the rights of older persons. The Conference was formerly opened by Her Excellency, Mrs. Dolapo Osinbajo, the wife of the Vice President, Federal Republic of Nigeria. The meeting attracted representations from governments, United Nations Department of Social And Economic Affairs, United Nations Economic Commission of Africa/Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development (UNECA/ARFSD), Africa Union, civil society organizations, private institutions, academia and older persons. The conference facilitated the sharing of unique national and regional experiences of older persons and their inclusion in the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

This Communiqué asserts priority actions are needed by African governments, UN systems, academia, civil society organizations, policy makers and practitioners to make the SDGs and Agenda 2063 inclusive of older persons. The two development frameworks set out universal plans for people of all ages and seek to realize the human rights of all people including older persons. Since the adoption of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 in 2015, little evidence of policy and programmatic interventions towards integration of older persons has been reported. The SDGs and Agenda 2063 frameworks require actions by national governments, United Nations, regional bodies, civil society organizations, academia, private sector and the public if any progress of inclusion of older persons will be realized.
Preamble

We, the participants at the SGA Africa First Annual African Regional Conference on Ageing do appreciate that there are unique challenges facing older persons and the need for multi-sectoral coordinated action, do hereby express our concern that ageing and older persons’ issues and rights have constantly received insufficient attention and visibility, resulting in older persons’ marginalization, discrimination and denied of their human rights in a wide range of areas.

Recognizing that Africa is experiencing the highest increase in the number of older persons and that the current systems and policies are insufficient to meet their rights and entitlements, we note that rapid population ageing requires longer term planning that will ensure societies are able to cope and prepare to take advantage of longer life expectancy.

We hereby reiterate the need for policy makers to expand their attention to the challenges affecting older persons. Policy makers in both human rights and sustainable development continue to turn a blind eye to older persons and that ageism (discrimination based on one’s age) is widely prevalent and not condemned resulting in negative perceptions and attitudes towards old age and older persons.

Acknowledging the economic growth potential of investments in older persons care market, the capacities and the socio-economic potential of older persons to enhance demographic dividends through conflict resolutions, knowledge transfer to youth as social capital and their continuing contributions in families and communities as family heads, farmers, entrepreneurs, professionals and politicians among others. It is important to recognize the contributions older persons continue to make in families and societies.

Further, noting the minimal investment governments are making in generation of evidence and improving technical capacity on ageing and older persons’ rights for effective policies and programmes. The implications are that so many older persons live in abject poverty; experience discrimination thus increasing their risks to neglect, abuse and violence; and policies and services are not sensitive to their needs.

Acknowledging that older persons have no organized movement to amplify their voice and have little awareness of their rights to hold government to account and to participate in decision-making.

Cognizant of the strength of the African family and community care which continues to weaken by increasing poverty, urbanization and migration. There is need to comprehensively integrate family and community level care with primary care systems for social medical continuum geriatric care services, long-term care and palliative care options to prolong the healthy life of older persons’ helping them remain productive, independent and autonomous is recommended.

We reaffirm that the fundamental responsibility for upholding, protecting and promoting the rights of older persons lies with Member States.

We are determined to advocate for the establishment of national and regional legal and policy frameworks that promote programmes and investments, accountability and transparency as well as participatory governance and coordinated partnerships at all levels and across sectors, that uphold the rights of older persons.
We recognize the fact that older persons are diverse, with different capabilities and face multiple and intersecting discrimination and inequalities including those related to their role as unpaid care providers, that must be addressed with integrated and coordinated actions by governments, civil society and development partners together.

We affirm that a life course, human rights based approach is essential to ensure that all older persons enjoy all their human rights without discrimination no matter where they live and the environment they find themselves.

Recognizing the fact that older persons face many challenges in the enjoyment of their human rights in the areas of prevention of and protection against violence and abuse, social protection, food and housing, financial services, the right to work and access to markets, equality and non-discrimination, independence and autonomy, access to justice, education, training, access to health and health support services like insurance, long-term and palliative care, lifelong learning, participation and accessibility.

Noting the discrimination older women experience is often multidimensional, with age discrimination compounding other forms of discrimination, intersecting with gender, culture and disability or other forms of discrimination. Recognizing that older persons are carers of orphans and vulnerable children as well as older persons and their caregivers experience multi-dimensions of poverty due to discrimination in services, there is need for social protection, community health care services and intergenerational community enterprices policies to integrate older persons and children.

Appreciating the value of cooperation in technical and capacity-building, especially through regional collaboration and partnerships, will support and enhance Member States’ efforts to address these challenges and to promote active and healthy ageing.

We affirm that critical and timely policies and programmatic interventions along the life course including universal health care and pension, nutrition, lifelong education, employment and career opportunities for all, will guarantee health and secure African population and continuing engagement of her older persons’ intrinsic capacities in later life.

We, the SGA Africa do hereby:
• **Commit to** support and facilitate initiatives that increase engagement of older persons with policy makers and ensure their meaningful and effective participation in decision making processes particularly in national policy and development processes, in particular those relating to their specific needs and concerns. Further, we commit to facilitate and mobilize various stakeholders to create a strong and active SGA-Africa architecture in the region across all countries to ensure their effective engagement in SDGs and Agenda 2063 and wider debates in the region to facilitate the voice of older persons and their inclusion;
• **Recognize** the importance of creating synergies and solidarity between youth and older persons for societies to reap the demographic dividends of increased life expectancy;
• **Call upon the** States to enhance their technical capacity on ageing and older persons’ rights; strengthen statistical capacity to effectively collect and analyze data disaggregated by age, gender and sex to understand the situation of older persons to make public policy fit for older persons;
• Motivated by the fact that all African countries have made commitments to the SDGs and Agenda 2063, we call for an enabling environment, enhanced political will, adequate budgetary allocations, improved capacity and evidence on older persons to ensure older persons access and enjoy their social, economic, cultural and political rights;

• Further, we call upon member states and CSOs platforms at national levels to create space for older persons and their organizations in their coordination mechanism for implementing SDGs and Agenda 2063;

• Commit as stakeholders to sustain a heightened awareness and capacity building initiatives of policy makers, the public and older persons on the rights of older persons. Priority should be given to local authority, frontline service providers and formation of older persons’ associations;

• Further reaffirm our commitment to the SDGs and Agenda 2063 principles of universality, prosperity for all, and human rights based approach and “Leave No One Behind”;

• Urge the Government line Ministries, Departments and Agencies, the UN system, national human rights institutions, academia, civil society and the public to join hands to ensure current and future generations across the continent lead dignified, productive and prosperous lives through promoting inclusive, age-friendly communities and environments and provide a range of support services that promote the dignity, autonomy and independence of older persons, to enable older persons to age gracefully and with dignity, in line with their will and preferences;

• Call upon the African Member states to accelerate the ratification and implementation of the African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa as well as to support the development, adoption and implementation of a UN convention of the rights of older persons;

• We, THEREFORE urge member states to establish, institutionalize and operationalize multi-sectorial coordination mechanisms for implementation of older persons’ rights.

Signed by the Co-Chairs of Stakeholder Group on Ageing – Africa this day, seventh of November 2018.

Emem Omokaro
Executive Director
Dave Omokaro Foundation
Email: firstdavem@yahoo.com

Roseline Kihumba
International & Regional Policies Coordinator
HelpAge International-Africa Regional Office
Email: roseline.kihumba@helpage.org

Sign: ___________________________  Sign: ___________________________

For more information on Stakeholder Group on Ageing – Africa activities, please do check our website: www.sgaeafrica.org.