

Side event “Stakeholder Group on Ageing Africa: Our Context - Autonomy Independence and Rights of Older Persons” CR 7, Organized by the Dave Omokaro Foundation and IFA and

Sponsored by Permanent Missions of Nigeria , Morocco, Kenya, South Africa, Chad, Norway, Argentina to the United Nations, UNDESA, UN OHCHR, HelpAge International and INPEA, UN NGO Committee on Ageing and GAROP

Moderator: Jane Barratt, Sec General, IFA: paid tribute to SGA Africa and to UN missions and UNDESA who joins us to help drive home side events such as this. In 10 years, she wasn't regarded as an older persons; now is. Her brother and her father have died. Now her 91 year old mother has difficulty accessing certain medical needs. Her father had difficulty with getting palliative care. Wants to know where our journey is going to get legal support. We count on the leadership of Nigeria in this discussion of the rights of a convention.

Permanent Representative from Morocco:

Number of 60+ is expected to more than double by 2050. In Africa, living longer 67 million by 2025. We have a mostly young population with faster rate by 3 times of older persons. NGOs provide training, shelter, etc. Government launched a programme for management of more than 44 centres. National Observatory for Older Persons was established as a platform to produce research and annual reports and advise government. Solidarity campaigns are organized annually. We are all born equal and this does not change with ageing. Human rights should not change with age. Older persons face real challenges. Strong support for rights of older persons.

Permanent Representative from Republic of South Africa: pleased to co-sponsor this event on such an important topic. Serious need to review our policies to protect rights and policies. Focusing on youth population for dividend but we are ageing rapidly and we give it high priority. Older Persons Act of 2016 and Elder Abuse policy dealing with administrative procedures to assist all involved in delivering services to vulnerable persons. Article 4 of AU Framework. Led with adoption of African Protocol and support MIPAA implementation. Measures should be taken to ensure inclusion of older persons in design of social benefits affecting them. Jane: MIPAA is soft law.

Permanent Representative of Kenya to the UN: Kenya is experiencing demographic shift in longer life expectancy. We focus on ensuring dignity, autonomy of older persons and is committed to leaving no one behind of Agenda 2030. Older persons are a resource not a burden. National policy 2014 outlines to tap into experience and skills of older persons. Promote their rights calls for deliberate efforts in legal, policy an programmatic interventions focusing on right to social protection, affordable healthcare, enhancing their capacity to participate.

What we are doing:

1. Non contributory social security
2. Draft bill on older persons
3. Guidelines on institutions for older persons to enhance their participation in development
4. President - focusing on universal health coverage
5. Cash transfer as part of social protection system

Challenges remain:

1. Abuse
2. NCDs increase
3. Neglect of older persons even by families
4. Limited number of homes for older persons

Unless we do corrections now, we will be recipients of those challenges in our old age.

Jane: What is the short term investment toward long term contributions of older persons?

Permanent Mission of Norway:

Sign of success is longer lives of Africans. We are impressed by stories we have heard in past years with African social security systems which benefits all built on an intergenerational compact. Lifelong learning and access to health services are essential as is gender equality for societies. Norway has robust social security system.. New discrimination law forbids discrimination against old age. Ageism is still prevalent. We have a lot to learn from African countries on treating older persons with respect. We need to change some practices and actions.

Jane: We are all ageing in this room and can learn from each other. We are the elders to negotiate and build on the conversation to have a convention.

Permanent Representative of Argentina: (read by a colleague) happy to sponsor this event and are very supportive. Autonomy and independence tomorrow will be reviewed and discussed tomorrow in a normative context to identify common perspectives. Argentina is supporter of rights of older persons and it is crucial to have an international convention. If we want older persons to participate actively in society they must have full rights. We are seeing better participation in this session of the OEWGA and always appreciate of vocal civil society and NHRIs.

Jane: This is about robust discussion together to find solutions. Recognized the efforts of Nigeria.

Programme:

Amal Abou Rafeh, UNDESA:

Africa is ageing and will grow old fast. Increase three fold with a 229% increase by 2050. Challenge is for a new narrative on ageing. Do not overlook opportunities that healthy older residents can bring.

She spoke about the value of Africans to create opportunities on SGA Africa Platform; Within 5 months of convening, SGA Africa held the first Africa conference, hosted by Nigeria. 300 participants attended. SGA Africa nominated two candidates to speak at the 2019, 10th UN OEWGA. SGA Africa held a joint event in collaboration at the African Regional Forum in Morocco also within the same dates and time frame. Over half of the 36 new NGOs registered for OEWGA came from Africa. SGA Africa ensures relevance of older persons are taken into account globally not just locally. UNDESA looks forward to working closely with you to strengthen rights of older persons in Africa.

Bertha from Tanzania, Good Samaritan Healthy Women's Group:

Tanzania has agreed that older persons are a resource to development of the country and has many policies regional, domestically policies eg on health (directives that help older people) but there are gaps in helping older people to make sure that health issues are taken care of. Directives that older people should be treated for free; there should a room in each health center where older people should go and is well appreciated. Gap: doctor is does not understand ills of older people and assume that it is just due to old age. Medicine is not free and sometimes too expensive. Have some insurance schemes but they don't coverage whole package of treatment. Government has put forward an ID for each older person. The process is going slowly to get it. National ageing policy - families should take of older members but we see changes in life making it difficult for them to be looked after by their families leaving a gap. Older Peoples Council is not in every region or village and there are some areas without them - another gap. Representation of older persons in those councils is not always well. Because of poverty and cultural traditions there are problems especially with older women, some are called witches. Widows have

problems with living arrangements. Great importance for government to implement what exists in policies.

Jane: this is informal government what is happening. Policies without implementation is useless as is implementation without monitoring. Write your questions with your email in case there is a need for follow up for answers.

Emem Omakaro, co-chair of SGA Africa and ED of David Omokaro Foundation

Thanked Ambassador from Nigeria for organizing ambassadors representation here today.

Civil society represents older persons constituents and most of us are in that bracket with own experiences. Noted GAROP publication Our Voices, Our Rights based on consultation in 10 countries (7 from Africa) with over 1,000 interviews. They spoke of desire to be able to be free to express themselves and to learn about their rights. She began to wonder about who are these people and what are their rights and how they expressed their dependencies. What caused denial of their rights? Their age? Because they are poor? When did it happen? Is it the structure? After they had contributed so much. What are systemic drivers the vulnerabilities of older persons? When we discuss normative elements, we will be better able to find the regress.

10 sessions of the OEWGA showing that we have faith in the outcome, African member states should understand systematic drivers of vulnerabilities. Human rights are inherent in the nature of man. (UN). The rights is universal and right to autonomy and independence is a component of the 3 documents that make up existing treaties. Look at CRPD, CEDAW, Constitutions. However, there is no legally binding instrument that gives clarity to the nature of rights of older persons and obligations necessary to protect them as do specific conventions for women, children and PWD.

What is needed:

1. Need options - who to live with? Where?
2. Ability to affect how others perceive and manage their opinion - you are invisible
3. The power to make choices when others overrule them

Africa

1. African Union
2. Agenda 2063
3. Respect older persons; outcome in later life are influenced by social advantages and disadvantages due to underlying cross sectional social process (no land rights; gender roles not permitjobs, avoidance of early marriage, etc.
4. Drivers of vulnerabilities: health deficit; lack of income; poor rural infrastructure; norms of reciprocity/obligation of adult children; multi-dimensional poverty/devastating events; lack of decent livelihood/education programs; emergency/humanitarian crisis. Older persons do not want to live with families (near them but not with them) Her doctorate.

Ageism is at the center as is political will to overcome it.

A UN Convention for the Rights of Older Persons is our aim. How soon will that happen?

Rio Hada, UNHCHR, Geneva

This is an important gathering as a part of overall effort to strengthen momentum this OEWGA to achieve its goal. Applaud efforts of Emem to bring voices of African older persons into this process. Population ageing effects the world. Practical challenges in implementation is rooted in inequality, discrimination, cultures and traditions (which can also support and value the wisdom and voices of older persons). Need a shift and are counting on the ambassadors.

Message from the Permanent Secretariat from Ministries of Women's and Social Affairs, Abuja:

In Nigeria, older persons enjoy independence in all areas enshrined in law. We have high regard for them. We are working toward establishing centres to socialize with peers to enjoy their twilight years.