

African Regional High-Level Conference on Human Rights Situation on Older Persons in Africa Monday November 25 2019.

Plenary 1 –Agenda Item2

Panel of Older Persons on Contextualizing the Reality of Older Persons in Africa: Equality and Non-discrimination, Neglect, Abuse, Violence and Stigmatization

Moderator Dr. Emem Omokaro Convener and Co-chair Stakeholder Group on Ageing Africa (SGA Africa), Executive Director, Dave Omokaro Foundation

1.0 Introduction

Older women and men in Africa largely continue to experience systemic inequality and age discrimination with ageism having a significant negative impact on the realization of envisioned continental prosperity for all, from implementation of the AU Agenda 2063 and SDG Agenda 2030. Longer- lives are fraught with vulnerability, diseases and multi-dimensional and persistent poverty thus depriving them of autonomy and independence. Current increase in longevity and projected rapid increase in the number of older persons in Africa therefore require urgent attention of policy makers and parliamentarians to link ageing to development and human rights frameworks and so modify policies, services, systems and legal frameworks to incorporate the capacities and vulnerability of older persons.

As panel discussants, older persons will be heard, as they talk about challenges of equity, fairness and human rights' breaches. The focus is on how older persons are denied their rights in the specific areas or are being excluded from services that they require. They will also share progress made in their countries with respect to inclusive policies, programs and services and why it is necessary to strengthen the protection of their rights and what they envisage, would be the impact of a regional and an international legally binding human rights instruments and how these can be achieved.

Discussions will center on the difficulties older people face in their everyday lives ; issues of autonomy and independence; health long term care with focus on dementia and care; education, lifelong learning opportunities for skills upgrading, access to labour market and work as well as older persons' income security, participation in society with respect and dignity.

2.0 Structure of Panel- Moderator Driven

There are six panelists drawn from 6 African countries including Uganda, Zambia, Kenya, Cameroon and Nigeria as well as Liberia. Each Panelist will have 3 minutes to introduce with a general over view of the

human rights situation of older persons in their respective countries and would zero in on one or two specific areas. It will be a moderator driven discussions. Time allotted for Panel Discussion; 40 minutes

3.0 The Panelists

The six older persons are frontline advocates in their countries and regions. They are drawn from Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Cameroon, Liberia and Nigeria. Their main objective is to sensitize national governments on the human rights situation of older persons in Africa and identify key areas for action, including support for an international instrument on the human rights older persons to guide national policies in this area.

4.0 Panelists will consider the following guiding questions:

- What is the current situation of older persons in your country? (discussants may focus on one or two specific areas to elucidate their points)
- What platforms are available at sub-national and national levels to engage older persons to make their voices and concerns heard? (Share national campaign experiences and the objectives)
- What are the experiences and best practices towards improving the wellbeing of older persons?
- What gaps still exists
- What support is needed for the effective implementation of legal and policy instruments to strengthen the protection of the rights of older persons

5.0 Reflections and Recommendations

It will involve removing barriers that older persons experience in accessing health care, social protection services, life-long learning opportunities and also humanitarian services. Rights to decent work and access to labour market and to justice will have to be recognized, acknowledged and protected to ensure the wellbeing of older persons.

**African Regional High-Level Conference on Human Rights Situation on Older Persons in Africa
Tuesday November 26 2019.**

Agenda Item 6

ECOWAS PARLIAMENT PLENARY SESSION

**Overcoming Challenges and Identifying Opportunities to Strengthen the Protection of the
Human Rights of Older Persons in Africa and the Support to the OEWG**

Presiding Rt. Honourable Moustapha Cisse Lo, Speaker of ECOWAS Parliament

1.0 Background

ECOWAS Parliament which is also known as the community parliament is a forum for dialogue, consultations and consensus for representatives of the people of West Africa. The Parliament is empowered to consider issues concerning human rights and fundamental freedom of citizens and public health policies among other issues. Established under Article 6 and 3 of the ECOWAS Revised Treaty of 1993, the Parliament is composed of 115 seats. Each of the 15 member States has a guaranteed minimum of five seats in Parliament and the rest are allocated according to size of populations. Members are Nigeria, Niger, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Ghana, Liberia, The Gambia, Cote d'ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Cape Verde. Others are Guinea, Benin and Togo

The Plenary is the highest body of the Parliament and its decisions are binding.

The adoption of the African Regional High Level Conference Agenda and the two -day programme of activities by ECOWAS Plenary, offer the highest sub-regional legislative strategic platform to address 15 National Assemblies and their communities. The engagement of Parliamentarians with stakeholders on Ageing is expected to have a wide and far reaching impact, also given the parliament's advisory mandate to ECOWAS Community and its member states' integration in the African Union

2.0 Structure of meeting

**Debate will be conducted in accordance with the rules as the Speaker directs the affairs of
engagement with the following:**

Member States | UN Agencies | Human Rights Institutions | ECOWAS Parliamentarians | Stakeholder Groups on
Ageing | Older Activists | Academia | NGOs

The multi-stakeholder plenary panel of lead speakers will address the Parliament on Overcoming Challenges and Identifying Opportunities in the Africa Region to further support the work of OEWG and the ratification of the Protocol to the Charter on Human and People's Rights and the Rights of Older Persons, towards strengthening the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons

3.0 Goal

The goal of stakeholders' engagement in the Plenary is to build the consensus among the parliamentarians and member states that it is very necessary to strengthen the protection of the rights of older persons through a regional and a reinforcing international legally binding instrument. The discussions focus on the specific areas that the Parliament with members drawn from 15 member states of the West African sub-regions can bring valuable substantive inputs to the process of accelerating, the protection of the rights of older persons in Africa.

Stakeholders aim to mobilize support towards comprehensive responses across the African continent on older persons and to share ideas on the nature of the support needed by National Assemblies and governments to accelerate the ratification of the protocol and participation in UN OEWG sessions. Also the role of the UN, AU, ECOWAS and the international community in enforcing the development, adoption and implementation of legal and policy instruments related to older persons in Africa

National Human Rights Institutes, Academia, Civil society and the Older persons themselves will engage the parliamentarians in an effort on ensuring that they and member states have the information and communications support necessary to mobilize and facilitate their work at national, regional and international levels.

4.0 Speakers will consider the following guiding discussion points:

- The responsibility of the stakeholders/members of Parliament in mobilizing support towards comprehensive responses across the African continent on older persons
- The nature of the support needed by countries to accelerate the ratification of the Protocol and participation in UN OEWG sessions
- The role of the ECOWAS, AU, UN and the international community in enforcing the development, adoption and implementation legal and policy instruments related to older persons in Africa
- How can older persons' organizations further engage policy makers and international actors in countering the negative narrative of older persons using youth groups, faith-based organizations, NGOs and academics?
- How the UN and AU and ECOWAS mechanism find synergies and ensure creating complementarities between the global and regional coordination mechanisms in Africa on the rights of older persons

5.0 Reflections and Recommendations

