

African Union, African Regional Bodies

Recommendation on the rights of older persons in Africa

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African Union

Recommendation on the rights of older persons in Africa

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CONSIDERING Article 17 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union on the establishment of the Pan-African Parliament to ensure the full participation of African peoples in the development and economic integration of the continent;

CONSIDERING also Article 3 of the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Pan-African Parliament, and Rule 4 (a) of the Rules of Procedure of the Pan-African Parliament, which empower the PAP to facilitate the implementation of policies, objectives and programmes of the African Union and to oversee their effective implementation;

CONSIDERING the international treaties protecting the rights of older people, including Article 18 (4) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; Article 7 and 10 of the Protocol to the Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons; Article 22 of the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa

RECALLING Recommendation 1 of the African Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing (2002), which states that "Member States recognise the fundamental rights of Older Persons and commit themselves to abolish all forms of discrimination based on age; that they undertake to ensure that the rights of Older Persons are protected by appropriate legislation";

MINDFUL of the rapid rate at which the population of older persons is increasing throughout Africa, and estimates that Africa will experience an increase in the ageing population from 64.4 million in 2015 to 220 million by 2050 and the vulnerability of persons older than 60 years old with a wide range of issues such as health care, disparities based on geographic location and social insurance needs;

RECOGNIZING that African traditional family structures embrace intergenerational partnerships and solidarity among generations, and respecting the value of older persons' support and caretaking roles and that older women face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including ageism, sexism, disability and the rural/urban divide, and the disproportionate role of older women in providing care and support for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, including orphans and vulnerable children;

IN ACCORDANCE WITH Rule 5 (d) of the Rules of Procedure of the Pan-African Parliament, which empowers the PAP to, inter alia, organize debate, discuss, express an opinion, make recommendations and take resolutions on the objectives and on any matters relating to the African Union and its organs, Regional Economic Communities, Member States and their organs and institutions;

NOW HEREBY RECOMMENDS:

1. The AU Member States to ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights relating to the Rights of Older Persons and guarantee protection for older persons with disabilities, including access to specialised care and assistive devices, as well as universal product design to ensure inclusivity;
2. The AU Member States to support the work of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, in particular, its Working Group on the Rights of Older Persons and People with Disabilities;
3. The AU Member States to adopt a gender perspective on policy and planning processes at all levels, taking account of intersecting forms of discrimination that affect older women including ageism, sexism, disability and the rural/urban divide;
4. The AU Member States to prevent, punish and eradicate all forms of violence against older persons and reject and eradicate all harmful cultural practices that cause ill-treatment and abuse of older persons in the public and private spheres;

5. The AU Member States to adopt universal social pension schemes that benefit retirees and older persons who do not have the opportunity to contribute to social security provisions;
6. The AU Member States to design and implement comprehensive healthcare policies for older persons, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, and facilitate access to health services and medical insurance cover, within available resources;

The AU Member States to prioritise preferential assistance for older persons in natural disasters and conflict situations, including civil strife or wars;
7. The AU Member States to adopt measures to ensure that older persons who take care of orphans and vulnerable children are provided with financial, material and other support, including social or other benefits designed for children;
8. The AU Member States to ensure the participation of older persons in making decisions about their own well-being, and to guarantee their involvement in social and political life by facilitating training and education programmes for older persons, including information, communications and technology skills in rural areas;
9. The AU Member States to engage with the media, civil society organisations and academic institutions, in raising awareness to change negative attitudes and promote positive images of older persons and promote volunteering opportunities for young people to interact, engage and support older persons in the family, the workplace and society at large.

Midrand, South Africa 17 May 2018