



AGE NIGERIA FOUNDATION

AGE NIGERIA FOUNDATION ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Age Nigeria Foundation is of firm believe that Older people must be at the center of discussion and be part of the core decision making about issues that concern them, Series of consultation were held across many states in Nigeria where a total number of 305 older women and men were consulted on the right issues to be discussed at the life session of Open Ended Working Group coming up next year. This submission will highlight some of their concerns on Access to Justice.

NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Nigeria Judicial framework has not put in place elder justice mechanism for older people to seek redress in Nigeria. The foundation, some of her network friends, other NGOs Civil Society Organizations have been at the forefront in helping older Nigerians fight against elder abuse and other forms of discrimination and violence against the older Nigerians. Elder abuse, violence and mistreatment are now on the high side in Nigeria as compared to other countries of the world, unfortunately there is no specific laws to protect the elderly in Nigeria as compared to law enacted to protect child's rights. Presently Age Nigeria Foundation is in custody of some elderly whose right have been violently abused and are victims of elder abuse and are denied justice in Nigeria. Classical example is Pa Shobaki from Abeokuta in Ogun State. " I listen to your programme on elder abuse on radio and I want you to know that my own daughter who is married to a sitting member of the congress is presently mistreating me in my own house, withdrawing from my bank account without my consent, collecting rent from my properties and locking me inside the house for me not to go out and see people that will be of help to me. Everywhere I go to lodge complain at the police station, human right centers, Lagos State Citizen Mediation Centers, Zone 2 Police command etc, she will go round and bribe the officials for them not to listen to me anymore claiming she is highly connected to people in power even at the highest level. How do I get justice? Please Age Nigeria Foundation help me to regain my freedom'. This was a clarion cry from an 80 years elderly man who is a fighter and everyday seek for justice on the mistreatment he received from his own Daughter. Check goggle ; father and daughter fight dirty over wife. Nigerian Sun Newspaper We have really supported him but to get justice has been hard for him. Majority of older people in Nigeria are advocating for judicial unit for the elderly in Nigeria.

AVAILABILITY

Older people are easily discriminated against and are prone to mistreatment, violence and neglect. Most Older Nigerian who are victims of elder abuse and mistreatment have judicial problem and are not protected by the legal system making them to be more vulnerable to more abuse and loss of their possession, loss of Landed properties and houses are very rampant in our nation and the older people are clamouring for solution to their justice issues. Cases like theft and debt, family dispute, divorce, taking another wife and inheritance, unfair dismissal, insurance claims, scams among others are issues that older adults always find hard to help resolve through judicial process in Nigeria

The alternative dispute resolution in Nigeria like Citizen Mediation Centers are not well disposed toward granting access to older people in our society.

ACCESIBILITY

Creating awareness on the rights of older to have more access to justice by creating elders protection unit that will give special consideration to disputes that involve the older people in Nigeria.

SPECIFIC CHALLENGE ENCOUNTERED

DISCRIMINATION AND AGEISM – Most older people interviewed claimed that negative attitude towards their age was a problem to getting justice. The older people believe that due to their old age, they have less chance to get justice as their complaints are normally not taken seriously. Even in courts some are treated with disrespect by court officials or being harassed by police. Some believe the proceedings were deliberately used to wear them out or with the believe that they would die before the case is settled.

ECONOMIC ACCESS

The financial burden is a major barrier for older people trying to access justice in Nigeria. Some believe the cost were too high for older people who do not earn regular income. Some do not have money to pay lawyers. Some believe they cannot pay corrupt officials.

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK-

The specific barriers older people face as regards access to justice are not adequately covered under international human right law. Dedicated standards within a UN Convention on the rights of older people are necessary to ensure older people have the right to access to justice without discrimination.