

COVID-19 and the rights of older people to accessing medical treatment

11th session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing

Humanitarian Ambassadors Organization

COVID-19 has affected older people disproportionately globally and sharply exposed the inequalities, discrimination, and ageism faced by older people worldwide. This reinforces the need to strengthen the protection of older people's rights. This crisis has shown how important it is, to protect older rights that can have equal opportunities to survive and to live with dignity. Regarding health in some societies, Age limits are being used to restrict access to healthcare because there are limited medical resources, such as ventilators or hospital beds

While the pandemic spreads among persons of all ages and conditions, older persons are at a significantly higher risk of mortality and severe disease following infection. Older people have the same right to be treated for COVID-19 as everyone else. we are concerned about recent calls in the media to prevent older people from accessing medical treatment for COVID-19. The virus hits older people particularly hard and death rates among those affected are high. Decisions on medical treatments based on age will deny many older people equal access to healthcare. We all have the same rights to life and health, regardless of our age. Denying these rights to older people is age discrimination.

Some protection measures adopted to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic can exacerbate the vulnerabilities and challenges faced by older people not only regarding their access to healthcare services, life-saving treatments and access to social services, but they can also have negative impacts on their jobs, and pensions as well as their mental and physical health.

situation of older persons who are quarantined or locked down with family members or caregivers and who may also face higher risks of discrimination, violence, abuse, and neglect is also under consideration. In this regard, we must scale up our efforts and strengthen measures to protect older persons from any form of gender- based violence.

HAO express deep concern about the threats faced by older people in humanitarian settings, where overcrowding, limited healthcare, nutritious food, water and sanitation, and barriers to humanitarian assistance can exacerbate their risks during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore strongly believe that measures taken as a

response to the COVID-19 must include the participation of older people, be inclusive of their specific needs and ensure their right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

We congratulate our government on the effective measures that put in place in our country to deliver a strong response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Still we have an important opportunity to work with other governments in the UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing's 11th session and be part of the solution. We have seen that government policies and action can make all the difference to our health and wellbeing.

we welcome the release of the Policy Brief of the United Nations on the impact of COVID-19 on older people and the United Nations COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan. The Policy Brief identifies the many risks faced by older persons in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and also highlights immediate and longer-term policy responses that governments must advance to support the needs and rights of older persons.

Humanitarian Ambassadors Organization (HAO) suggests that we shall ensure that medical decisions are based on individualized clinical assessments, medical need, ethical criteria and on the best available scientific evidence.

We should ensure continuity of adequate care services for older persons such as mental health services, palliative and geriatric care, including through support for unpaid care givers in homes and communities.

We must all work together to strengthen the international and intergenerational solidarity to promote responses that foster healthy ageing and the human rights and dignity of older people during COVID-19 crisis and the recovery process.