

HelpAge International written statement to the 11th Open-ended Working Group on Ageing for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons, 29th March – 1st April 2021

Item 6. Discussion on normative inputs March 30th 2021

HelpAge International thanks the panelists for their interventions and welcomes the Working document A/AC.278/2021/CRP.2 on substantive inputs on the normative content of the rights to education, training, lifelong learning and capacity building and to social protection and social security.

We would like to emphasise the following normative elements as central to the enjoyment of these rights.

Right to education, training, lifelong learning and capacity building

A key normative element of the right to education and lifelong learning is that older persons have the right to acquire, utilise and transmit their knowledge and skills without discrimination and on an equal basis with others.¹

To achieve the purpose of living autonomous and independent lives, fulfilling our aspirations, developing our full human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and participating fully in society² in our older age, the right to acquire knowledge and skills through education and lifelong learning must come with the right to use and share that knowledge and skills.

Explicit articulation of this normative element of the right in a new convention on the rights of older persons would provide guidance on how to respect this right and help ensure that systems, mechanisms and legal frameworks are in place so that all older persons are able to acquire, utilize and transmit their knowledge and skills. It would also support the interdependence with other rights such as the right to work without discrimination and on an equal basis with others.

Right to social protection and social security

A key normative element of the right to social protection and social security is that of adequacy. Older persons have the right to social protection and social security measures, whether in cash or kind, that are of a high enough value, quantity and quality, and for the full period of life, for an adequate standard of living so that they can live autonomous, independent lives with dignity and can fully participate in society.³

¹ See CEDAW Art. 10; CRPD Art. 24; CESCR General Comment No. 13, 1999, paragraph 6 b) i)

² See UDHR Art. 26; ICESCR Art. 13; CRPD Art. 24

³ See CRPD Art.28.1; Protocol to ACHRP Art.7; CESCR General Comment No.19, 2008, paragraph 22

Enshrining in a convention the right of everyone in older age to an income sufficient to live dignified, autonomous and independent lives in which they can fully participate in society on an equal basis with others would provide a solid base for a fairer society and would help ensure that governments, the private sector and others design and deliver social protection and social security measures that respect older people's rights.

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