

RIGHT TO EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY OLDER PERSONS URGENTLY NEEDED: STATEMENT FROM DR. ISAAC KABELENGA, SENIOR CITIZENS ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA (SCAZ) AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR THE PREVENTION OF ELDER ABUSE (INPEA)

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Introduction

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” is a popular motto in all human rights organizations and documents (United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNUDHR), 1948 Article.1). Unfortunately, this is just a ‘buzz motto’ to some older persons in Zambia. This is evident in failure by some older persons to enjoy the right to employment and social security. In this statement, SCAZ presents discrimination against older persons in Zambia with regard to right to employment and social security and why the international convention is urgently needed:

- To begin with, Article 23 of the UDHR states that everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and protection against unemployment and to just and favorable remuneration. To the opposite, in Zambia older people are rarely given a fair chance by employers in terms of employment opportunities because they are considered as too old. This employment discrimination is clearly evident if one looks at job advertisements available in the Zambian News Papers. It is very rare to find any job adverts in the Zambian News Papers where employers indicate that they are looking for people aged 60 years and above. This is a complete contrast of the above article which Zambia ratified.
- Zambia National Ageing Policy (2013) have reported that in rural parts of Zambia where the majority of older persons live, poverty is more pronounced as 80 % of households headed by older persons fall below the poverty line.

- Despite the older people being one of the most vulnerable categories of people in Zambia due to their age and economic situations among others, older people are discriminated against social security (Zambia National Ageing Policy, 2013). The majority of the older people have no social security (Kabelenga, 2018). This is contrary to Article 22 of the UDHR which states that everyone has the right to social security.
- The President of Zambia (2012) revealed that only a tiny fraction of the older people are covered by social security arrangements. Of this small percentage that manage to have pension, the majority struggle to have their pensions paid for several years with others dying without receiving their pensions. This has resulted in making many older people to lead very stressful life styles (Kabelenga, 2018).

Key messages for the United Nations and Zambia

- Older persons need to work throughout their life course in order to survive,
- If we are serious about leaving no one behind and eradicating poverty, older persons should be allowed to work and have social security

MAIN REFERENCE

Kabelenga, Isaac. (2018). **Elder Abuse in Rural and Urban Zambia – Interview study with community leaders**. Rovaniemi, Acta Universitatis Lapponiensis 372.