

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Submission by:

UNIVERSAL PEACE AND VIOLENCE AMELIORATION CENTRE
Organization in Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) *since 2019*



SUBSTANTIVE INPUT

**THE CHAIR OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP FOR THE PURPOSE OF
STRENGTHENING THE PROTECTION OF THE HUMAN
RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS**

FOURTEENTH WORKING SESSION

**UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK
20-24 MAY 2024.**

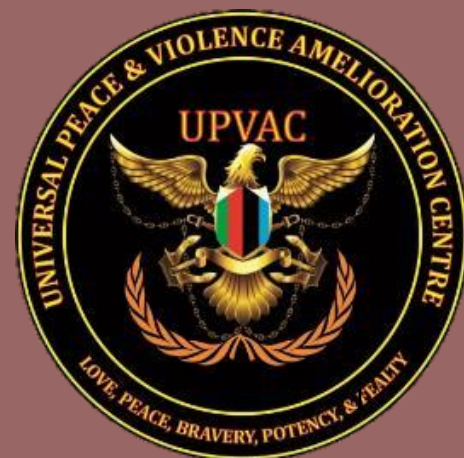
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1. National Legal and Policy Framework:

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National and Local Legal Framework in Nigeria:

- The Nigerian Constitution guarantees the right to equality and prohibits discrimination against older persons based on age or any other grounds in public life and decision-making processes.
- Various national policies, including the National Policy on Ageing, aim to eliminate ageism and age discrimination from laws, frameworks, and policies related to participation in public life.
- Older persons have the right to freedom of expression, assembly, and association, as enshrined in the Constitution.
- Legal provisions allow older persons to participate in peaceful assembly and take part in the government through freely chosen representatives.
- Mechanisms for the active and meaningful participation of older persons and their representative organizations in decision-making processes are outlined in national policies.
- Access to prompt remedies and redress is ensured through the legal system and governmental mechanisms for addressing violations of older persons' rights.

National and Local Legal Framework in Bangladesh:

- Similar to Nigeria, the Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equality and prohibits discrimination against older persons in public life and decision-making processes.
- National policies and frameworks aim to eliminate ageism and age discrimination, ensuring older persons' rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association.
- Legal provisions allow older persons to participate in the government and ensure their active involvement in decision-making processes.
- Mechanisms for redress and remedies are in place to address violations of older persons' rights to participate in public life.

2. Measures to Ensure Participation without Discrimination

Steps that have been taken to ensure participation in public life and in decision-making processes without discrimination:

In Nigeria:

- **Legislative Reforms:** Nigeria has enacted laws and policies aimed at promoting inclusivity and diversity in public life and decision-making processes, ensuring older persons' participation without discrimination based on age or other grounds.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Government-led awareness campaigns and civil society initiatives (for example the National Senior Citizens Centre Stakeholders Consultative Forum) educate the public about the importance of inclusivity and non-discrimination, fostering a culture of respect for older persons' rights and contributions.
- **Capacity Building:** Training programs and capacity-building initiatives especially those organized by NGOs and Civil Societies empower older persons to engage actively in public affairs, providing them with the skills and knowledge needed to participate effectively in decision-making processes.
- **Consultative Mechanisms:** Established consultative mechanisms and forums enables older persons and their representative organizations to engage in dialogue with policymakers, advocating for their rights and interests without facing discrimination.

In Bangladesh:

- **Legal Reforms:** Bangladesh has implemented legal reforms and anti-discrimination laws to ensure older persons' participation in public life and decision-making processes without facing age-based discrimination.
- **Government Support:** The government provides support and resources to older persons' associations and advocacy groups, enabling them to amplify older persons' voices and concerns in policy discussions and decision-making forums.
- **Awareness Raising:** Public awareness campaigns and media outreach efforts raise awareness about the rights and contributions of older persons, challenging ageist stereotypes and fostering a culture of respect and inclusion in public life and decision-making processes.
- **Community Engagement:** Community-based initiatives promote older persons' participation in local governance structures and development activities, ensuring their inclusion in decision-making processes at the grassroots level.

3. Data and Research

Data on older persons' participation in public life and decision-making processes in Nigeria and Bangladesh are similar in a sense that it is limited. National and sub-national surveys may collect information on older persons' engagement in community activities and governance structures, but disaggregation by sex, age, and other inequality dimensions is often inadequate. Indicators used to monitor older persons' participation often include:

- Representation in Government: Tracking the number of older persons serving in elected or appointed positions at national, state, and local levels.
- Community Engagement: Monitoring older persons' involvement in community development projects, participatory budgeting processes, and decision-making forums.
- Access to Information: Assessing older persons' access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their ability to participate in public discourse and advocacy efforts.
- Civil Society Participation: Examining older persons' participation in civil society organizations, NGOs, advocacy groups, and grassroots movements.

4. Equality and Non-Discrimination

Challenges and Barriers that older persons face regarding participation in public life and in decision-making processes, including the impact of intersectional discrimination and inequality based on age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, migratory status and other grounds.

- Older persons face challenges and barriers in participating in public life and decision-making processes due to ageism, gender discrimination, disability, and other forms of intersectional discrimination.
- Limited access to education, information, and technology hinders older persons' engagement in public affairs.
- Socio-cultural norms and traditional gender roles may marginalize older women, further limiting their participation in decision-making.
- Socio-economic factors, including poverty and lack of education, further marginalize older persons and limit their engagement in public affairs.

5. Accountability Mechanisms

- Judicial mechanisms, including the courts and tribunals, provide avenues for older persons to file complaints and seek redress in cases of violations of their rights to participate in public life. Similar to Nigeria, Bangladesh has judicial and non-judicial mechanisms for older persons to lodge complaints and seek redress in cases of violations of their rights to participate in public life.
- Governmental agencies and oversight bodies ensure accountability and address instances of discrimination or exclusion of older persons from decision-making processes.