



**INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION  
OFFICE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Sixth Session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing**

**Item 4. Existing international framework on the human rights of older persons and  
identification of existing gaps at the international level**

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**Mr. Chair,**

Excellences, delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

As you consider the possibility of establishing an international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons, the ILO would like to recall the importance of the already existing set of international labour standards, including ILO conventions and recommendations, in addressing issues that are at the very core of the ageing process, notably in the areas of:

- social security and social protection floors
- equality of treatment and opportunity and elimination of discrimination in the world of work
- skills, vocational training and lifelong learning
- conditions of work, including occupational safety and health

In 2013, tripartite delegations representing governments, workers and employers meeting at the International Labour Conference conducted a comprehensive review of the far-reaching implications of the changing in the demographic context in the world of work.

The conclusions called for a comprehensive multidimensional and integrated policy mix that recognizes the interdependency between ageing, employment, social protection and sustainable development, guided by the fundamental principles and rights at work of the ILO and pursuing the objective of decent work over the life cycle.

In this respect, Mr. Chair, please allow me to highlight five issues that are relevant to your deliberations.

First, ILO delegates called for urgent implementation of **national floors of social protection floors** to guarantee that all persons have access to essential health care and basic income

security. The Social Security Minimum Standards Convention (No. 102), and Social Protection Floors Recommendation (No. 202), provide an international framework for the establishment of comprehensive and fiscally sustainable social security systems that ensure protection throughout the life cycle.

Second, ILO delegates also emphasized the need for policies to **combat discrimination** based on age, including by:

- promoting, enforcing and/or enacting employment legislation that combats discrimination on the basis of age and disability;
- conducting awareness-raising campaigns to combat negative attitudes about older persons and to increase appreciation of their value to society and world of work.
- encouraging enterprise-level initiatives such as company-run diversity programmes.

Third, **lifelong learning opportunities** should be promoted to foster employability and productivity and to prevent skills obsolescence in particular among senior workers. Measures could include:

- Upgrading skills in the use of new technologies.
- Removing age limits in access to learning and training.
- Providing and viewing training as an integral part of career planning.
- Supporting a conducive environment for learning and development, for example through mixed-age teams and mentoring.

Fourth, measures that foster preventive **health and safety at the workplace** and healthy lifestyles should be promoted throughout the life cycle including the development of occupational safety and health legislation with appropriate compliance mechanisms, and taking into account age-, gender- and disability-specific health and workplace needs.

In addition, policies to provide for **flexibility in working time and work organization** according to needs specific to age groups, gender and disability, while maintaining adequate social security coverage, should be considered

Finally, the demographic transition will increase demand for **care workers**. The promotion of the care sector and its long-term sustainability is essential to protect people and to ensure that they live and age in dignity. The care sector also presents new opportunities for investment, innovation and job creation. Good management and professionalization of the sector is necessary to ensure the provision of quality care.

The ILO welcomes the inclusion of such relevant issues for older persons – social protection, discrimination, skills for decent work and occupational safety health, care work – as part of the Post 2015 sustainable development goals. We are committed and ready to support member states and social partners in achieving the sustainable development objectives for all.