

## **Focus areas of the XIII Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Aging**

### **Focus area 1: Right to health and access to health services**

#### **National legal and policy framework**

The Dominican Republic has in its regulatory framework provisions that guarantee the right to health, as well as access to health services, aimed at protecting human rights, enshrined mainly in the Dominican Constitution, General Health Law 42-01, Law 352-98 on Protection of the Aged Person and Law on Mental Health 12-06.

The Dominican Constitution regarding the protection of the elderly enshrines the guarantee of assistance to the elderly and the promotion of integration into an active community life, as well as comprehensive social security services and subsidy food in case of indigence <sup>1</sup>.

The State ensures that care for the elderly goes beyond the pathological approach and encompasses the totality of their well-being, taking into account the interdependence of physical, mental, social and environmental factors. Health care should allow the participation of the entire sanitary system, social and family sectors in improving the quality of life of the elderly.

Likewise, to develop health services in the community that should include ambulatory and home care and provide medical examination and counseling services in geriatric clinics, health centers and community premises.

To guarantee that all older people have access to good care and services, the Consejo Nacional de la Persona Envejeciente (CONAPE) has specialized medical care programs, offering this service in home visit programs as well as in Daycare homes.

At the same time, we have programs such as “SENASA Cuida de ti”, focused on guaranteeing comprehensive health care services for older adults, social protection and improving the quality of life.

As a State, we are dedicated to promoting Law 352-98 on the Protection of the Aged Person, which establishes in its Chapter II, the right to health and nutrition of this age group, both to the main actors in formulating actions in favor of this population as well as other nationals, in order to guarantee that the rights of the elderly are fulfilled.

Among the challenges to provide better care to older adults and that in turn they can have greater access to health services, we have a lack of geriatric professionals who can meet the need for specialists in this branch that the country needs.

#### **Progressive realization and use of the maximum available resources**

Within the policies promoted to guarantee the right of the elderly to health, the State has focused on increasing the budget for the acquisition of purchases of medicines to be delivered to permanent homes and

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<sup>1</sup> Art. 57, Constitution of the Dominican Republic

day homes, as well as older adults who come to CONAPE to make requests for medications for continuous use.

In the same way, through medical operations in the different communities to offer free primary care services to older adults with little access to obtain these services.

### **Equality and non-discrimination**

Currently, the challenges faced by older persons in the enjoyment of the right to health, is to ensure that the different organs of the State identify synergies and act in an articulated manner to optimize the formulation of public policies that improve access to health services for the elderly, either through programs that prioritize the attention provided to this population group, such as breaking down architectural barriers and difficulties in mobilizing and adequate transportation for older adults with some degree of physical limitation or dependency.

For this reason, CONAPE promotes awareness talks on the good treatment that must be given to the elderly, as well as the needs that must be covered to guarantee their rights.

### **Accountability**

CONAPE has the Complaints and Case Monitoring area, which is responsible for receiving, investigating, and processing complaints of abuse and maltreatment of the elderly, and for following up on cases of this nature and violations of the fundamental rights of the elderly. In turn, with a Specialized Prosecutor for Violence and Mistreatment against the elderly which is attached to the Department of Human Rights of the Attorney General's Office.

In this sense, through the Non-Profit Associations (ASFL) accredited in the institution, older adults from different communities and social strata meet who participate in the different activities carried out in order to guarantee their rights. In addition, a representative of this population group is integrated into the CONAPE Board of Directors in order to include older adults in the development of actions in favor of their rights.

### **Focus Area 2: Social Inclusion**

The Dominican State has focused on promoting a culture of inclusion and participation for the elderly in society, promoting the non-institutionalization of this population group through the different programs carried out by CONAPE. In turn, following the guidelines to achieve the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the country, it has developed legal provisions that guarantee their rights, such as the following: Law 352-98 on Protection of the Aged Person, the Action Protocol to guarantee Access to Justice for Vulnerable Groups; its Implementation Guide, and Law 1-12 of the National Development Strategy.

The right to work is constitutionally stipulated as a duty and a social function that is exercised with the protection and assistance of the State. It is the essential purpose of the State to promote decent and remunerated employment. The public powers will promote dialogue and agreement between workers,

employers and the State. <sup>2</sup>It is important to guarantee the participation of this age group through non-discriminatory measures that improve conditions for the benefit of this sector.

In this sense, CONAPE has implemented the "Pasantés con Sabiduría" program through which employment is promoted for the elderly with easy hours and incorporates their knowledge together with young people to promote the integration of generations, facilitating active participation in the economy. of the older adult population.

Regarding institutionalized older adults, CONAPE ensures that they receive social services under equal conditions, offering continuous support to access them in case of physical or mental disabilities. Likewise, within the permanent attention centers, recreational activities have been incorporated with the elderly, among which are: walks, celebration of cultural activities, commemoration of special dates, family gatherings, use of technologies to communicate with their family.

Currently, the Dominican Republic has a correction and rehabilitation center for older adults deprived of liberty, in Haras Nacionales, with the purpose of providing a treatment that allows effective rehabilitation, raising awareness about the crimes committed and commitments in favor of non-violence recidivism and guarantee equal treatment. This center allows them to carry out training and occupational therapies and to practice a trade that keeps them active and connected with society, despite their situation of freedom.

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<sup>2</sup>Art. 62, Constitution of the Dominican Republic