

Republic of Türkiye

February 20th, 2023

Guiding questions for the thirteenth session

Focus Area 2: Social Inclusion

The Scope:

Social inclusion is a precondition for the ability of older persons to exercise multiple human rights. Social inclusion is the process of improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status through (1) enhanced opportunities, (2) access to resources (3) voice and (4) respect for rights.¹ From a human rights perspective, achieving social inclusion requires addressing the discriminatory structures that have led to exclusion, deprivation of resources and lack of opportunities identified in multiple international human rights instruments.

On one hand, the full social inclusion of older persons lays upon removing existing barriers and, on the other hand, on the adoption of measures that actively promote their inclusion. As such, the achievement of social inclusion is realized through the exercise of human rights that have already been or will be analyzed by the Working Group. These guiding questions are therefore geared towards addressing exclusively those areas that have not been, nor will be, addressed in other sessions of the Working Work.

The following focus areas and their impact on the social inclusion and/or exclusion of older persons have already been covered by the Working Group:

- Equality and non-discrimination
- Neglect, violence and abuse
- Autonomy and independence
- Long-term care and palliative care
- Social protection and social security
- Education, training, lifelong learning and capacity building
- Access to justice
- Right to work and access to the labor market
- Economic security
- Contribution of older persons to sustainable development

The following focus areas and their impact on the social inclusion and/or exclusion of older persons may be covered by the Working Group in a forthcoming session:

- Participation in the public life and in decision-making processes
- Accessibility, infrastructure and habitat (transport, housing and access)

¹ UN DESA (2016) Report of the World Social Situation 2016

The guiding questions:

1. What are the legal provisions, policy frameworks and/or measures in your country that explicitly focus on older persons who are marginalized on the grounds of their sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic or other status? (This may include addressing older populations on frameworks dedicated to other marginalized groups such as women, persons with disabilities, migrants, minorities, homeless people etc.; or addressing marginalized groups within frameworks devoted to older persons)
2. What legal age limits exist in your country that prevent the full and equal participation of older persons in societies in areas such as employment, education, healthcare, financial goods and services, or others?
3. What measures are in place, if any, to ensure that older persons in institutions segregated from their communities -such as institutional care systems or prisons- can continue participating in their society?
4. States have an obligation to use maximum available resources to progressively achieve the full realization of economic, social and cultural rights. What is the share of national public expenditure budget targeted to older persons as a distinct group?

Although services for older persons are provided by different public institutions, local governments, civil society organizations and the private sector in Türkiye, the main government body that is responsible for both carrying out the services and coordinating public and private institutions who engage services for older persons is the Directorate General of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly affiliated with the Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS). The General Directorate also coordinates the implementation of national policies and strategies in order to ensure that the older persons participate in social life effectively and without discrimination against all kinds of obstacles, neglect and exclusion.

In addition to the social services and social assistance provided to the older persons by the MoFSS, a rights-based approach has been adopted in the social policies on ageing. The ultimate goal of these policies is to ensure that older persons live an independent, high-quality, active and healthy life in the community in accordance with their preferences and human dignity on the basis of social inclusion.

In this context, “Ageing Vision Document and Action Plan”, a high-level policy document, is being drafted up by the MoFSS, which will guide the policies, programs and services on ageing by 2030. It aims to enable individuals to actively participate in the active ageing process in every period of their lives, to strengthen the rights of older persons, to develop new service and support models for older persons with a rights and social inclusion-based approach, to strengthen intergenerational solidarity, and to present a new vision with a family and society-oriented approach. In the Document, objectives and activities are set in 7 policy areas for older

persons: active and healthy ageing, participation in social life, age friendly cities and local governments, long-term care services, rights of older persons, multilateral cooperation and age-disaggregated data and monitoring. Ageing Vision Document and Action Plan is planned to be completed and shared with the public opinion in 2023, and it will be implemented in close collaboration with the relevant public institutions and organizations.

The goals and actions of 11th Development Plan (2019-2023), which is one of the high-level policy documents and prepared to contain holistic policies in the economic, social, cultural and health fields every five years in Türkiye, are based on the main axis such as active aging, social inclusion, intergenerational solidarity, developing institutional and legal infrastructure, data sources activities on aging, health services, long-term care. In this context, the policies and measures explicitly focus on older persons' social inclusion in the Plan are as follows:

- Diversifying and disseminating social service models within the framework of human-oriented social policies,
- Expanding quality, affordable and easily accessible care opportunities for children, persons with disabilities and older persons,
- Developing standards of care services for persons with disabilities and older persons and increasing the quality and quantity of personnel providing these services,
- Improving the interior and the environmental design to prevent falls and reduce incidents that older people may encounter,
- Enhancing the access of older adults to lifelong learning opportunities,
- Developing mechanisms that will enable older adults to stay in working life longer under certain conditions,
- Creating social spaces and environments where ideas and values can be transferred between generations,
- Supporting voluntary activities and projects that will increase intergenerational solidarity,
- Developing data-driven services and policies for aging population,
- Protecting public spaces in cities, especially open and green spaces; improving access and security; reconstructing it within the framework of human-nature relationship that is sensitive to women, children, older people and persons with disabilities,
- Enhancing access to healthcare services for older people, especially those living in rural areas, strengthening preventive and curative services for them,
- Expanding home healthcare services to increase access, efficiency and quality; ensuring the integration of intensive care, palliative care and geriatric services with home care services,
- Carrying out health follow-ups for older people, strengthening preventive and curative services for diseases that increase with age, increasing the number of centres providing geriatrics and palliative care services.

There aren't legal age limits that prevent the full and equal participation of the older persons in societies. Everyone is covered by the general health insurance and public health services are

provided free of charge including older persons. Even though there is no general, legally defined maximum age for employment in Türkiye; while the age limit for civil servants working in the public sector is 65 in general, there is no age limit for employment according to the Labor Law No. 4857.

Educational activities for various age groups including older people are offered by central and local public institutions, and civil society organizations. The most common of these trainings are the courses that provide lifelong skills, knowledge and cultural development to individuals from different age groups at the Public Education Centres affiliated to the Ministry of National Education. These courses are given free of charge periodically at certain times of the year. These courses are designed to be accessible to all segments of society at the district and neighbourhood level.

Furthermore, universities in some of the provinces offer higher education programs for older persons within the framework of active aging and lifelong learning. These programs, namely 3rd Age Universities, enable the individual to spend the aging process as productive and meaningful as other stages of his/her life and to continue his personal development in a comprehensive way within the framework of the concept of lifelong learning. 3rd Age University is an important part of lifelong learning in Türkiye. Thus, it is expected that the education given to older people improves the health awareness, intellectual and physical activities and artistic capacities of them and encourage active participation in the local environment. 3rd Age University is seen as an opportunity for older people to integrate with the society and maintain their productivity.

In Türkiye, community-based care services are prioritized in order to ensure that older persons receive care services alongside their families and to ensure social inclusion. In this context, home care allowance, home support services, elderly living homes (which are a community based care model, rented apartments for older persons/couples to provide care services within the community) and day service centers are provided in addition to the institutional long-term care. Although long-term care services in Türkiye are rendered by different institutions and organizations such as municipalities, foundations, associations and private sector; the MoFSS is the main public authority that carries out services of the identification, protection, care, training and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities and older persons.

Within this context, MoFSS provides not only quality long-term care services but also ensures the participation of older care recipients in social and cultural life. Various practices are carried out nationwide in order to increase the participation of older care recipients and their families

in social life, to develop their independent living skills with digital technological instruments, and to encourage implementations aimed at increasing their quality of life. Practices such as organizing Bocce tournaments between nursing home residents (which have become a tradition in nursing homes), digital and financial literacy trainings particularly for older persons who receive care in nursing homes and Digital Bahar Project which aims to set up rooms equipped with digital technological devices within nursing homes.