

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix - Travail- Patrie

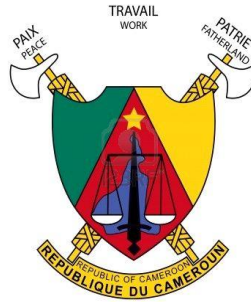
MINISTERE DES AFFAIRES SOCIALES

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

DIRECTION DE LA PROTECTION SOCIALE DES
PERSONNES HANDICAPEES ET DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES

SOUS -DIRECTION DE LA PROTECTION
DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES

SERVICE DE LA PROMOTION DES DROITS
DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace - Work - Fatherland

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS

GENERAL SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION OF PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES AND THE ELDERLY

SUB DEPARTMENT IN CHARGE OF THE PROTECTION
OF OLDER PERSONS

SERVICE FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION
OF THE RIGHTS OF THE ELDERLY

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Substantive guiding questions

National legal and policy framework

1. The legal provisions, policy frameworks in Cameroon that recognize older person's rights to participate in and contribute to sustainable development are:

At the legal level

- ❖ The Constitution establishes in its preamble the principle for the protection of older persons as follows: "The nation protects (...) older persons";
- ❖ The Civil Code makes provision for the duty of maintenance that is the responsibility of the descendants over the ascendants, which implies the obligation of supporting them in case of need.
- ❖ The Criminal Code comprises protective provisions for older persons; notably: Article 180 on the alimony that curbs the lack of support payment owing to ascendants; article 282 that punishes the neglect of incapable persons; article 283 that sanctions the omission to assist any person in danger; article 351 that makes of violence over ascendants a circumstance of aggravation of articles 275 (murder), 277 (serious injuries) and 278 (fatal assault) and entails a doubling of the sentence provided in articles 279 (1) (aggravated assault and battery), 280 (simple injuries) and 281 (minor injuries);
- ❖ The Criminal Procedure Code comprises provisions organizing the protection of the individual in general and of the older person in particular. This includes notably: Art. 116(3) which states that the judicial police officer shall, as soon as the preliminary inquiry is opened, inform the suspect of their right to make themselves assisted by a council; Art. 122(2) that proscribes any form of

physical or mental violence, torture, violence, trickery, insidious moves, in order to obtain information from the suspect.

❖ The Social Law of Cameroon that comprises a set of texts organizing the social protection of older persons entitled to retire, notably:

- Law n°67/LF/18 of June 12 1967 organizing the social security in Cameroon;
- Law n° 69/LF/18 of November 10 1969, instituting the old-age pension, disablement and whole-life insurance scheme, modified by the law n°84/007 of July 04th 1984;
- Law n° 84/007 of July 04th 1984, modifying the law n°69/LF/18 of November 10th 1969 directing an old-age pension, disablement and whole-life insurance scheme;
- Order n°73/17 of May 22, 1973 organizing the social security;
- Decree n° 74/733 of August 19, 1974, setting the modalities for applying the law n°69/LF/18 of November 10, 1969 directing an insurance scheme for old-age pension, disablement and whole-life;
- Decree n°94//199 of October 07, 1994 on the General Status of the Public Service that organizes the State's scheme of pensions paid to retired public agents;
- Decree n°77/495 of December 07, 1977 setting the conditions for the creation and running of Private Social Structures (PSS) that favor the putting in place of private structures delivering care to older persons.

Furthermore, in application of the provisions of decree n°82/412 of September 09, 1982 setting the modalities for grants of aids by the State to destitute and needy persons, destitute older persons benefit from various types of assistance (medical, financial, school, and psychosocial, in equipment...) from the State, for their personal needs and those of their offspring.

In addition, decree n° 2010/0243/PM of February 26, 2010 fixing the modalities for exercising the competences transferred by the State to Municipalities in terms of aids and assistance granted to destitute and needy persons, older persons receive aid in form of donations or service provision for their socio-professional integration.

At the institutional level

- ❖ Decree n°85/1196 of August 29, 1985 organizing the Ministry of Social Affairs has created a Bureau for the protection of senior citizens in that ministerial department;
- ❖ Decree n°95/100 of June 9, 1995 organizing the MINASCOF places the promotion of senior citizens under the authority of a Sub-Director;
- ❖ Decree n°98/069 of May 4, 1998 organizing MINAS maintains a Sub-department for the Promotion of Persons with disabilities and Older Persons;
- ❖ Decree No. 2005/160 of May 25, 2005 organizing the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS), has created a Department for the Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities and Older Persons with a Sub-Department for the Protection of Older Persons.
- ❖ Decree n° 2011/408 of December 9, 2011 organizing the Government assigns to the Ministry of Social Affairs, the follow-up of older persons in relation with the administrations concerned.

2) The challenge face by older persons for the realization of their rights to contribute to sustainable development at national and international levels:

Health and well-being

- Inaccessibility to medical care ;
- Inadequate care of third age pathologies ;
- Inappropriate feeding and nutrition ;
- Absence of specific programs to fight against HIV/AIDS in favor of older persons;
- High cost in medicines common in the treatment of ageing pathologies.

Difficult accessibility of older persons to medical care

Problems and needs identified concern mostly the high cost of medical care and medications; far and distant health centers for older persons in rural areas as well as poor reception in hospitals.

Inadequate care of third age pathologies

Problems and needs identified here are, the insufficiency in services specialized in geriatrics and the inexistence of structure and/or training programs of personnel specialized in geriatrics.

Inappropriate feeding and nutrition

Problems identified here are, Ignorance of health rules, unavailability of foodstuff due to famine affecting some localities in Cameroon and inaccessibility of foodstuff due to poverty.

High cost in medicines common in the treatment of ageing pathologies

Treatment of ageing pathologies is costly and cannot be acquired easily, especially faced with the precariousness of most of the older persons. It is the case with diabetes of which insulin becomes scarce in the market and patients have to spend considerable sums of money to obtain it.

Difficult accessibility of older persons to resources and loans

Conditions to obtain bank loans and financial resources in general are unfavorable to older persons due to their age and little reimbursement guaranties. In fact, banks grant loans only to persons who still have many years to live and consequently are able to reimburse in medium or long term. This discrimination is further aggravated by the non-existence of specific programs that can finance the reconversion of older persons.

Limited access to employment

In a context where youth unemployment rate is very high, older persons find difficulties, face real hostility when job hunting. They resolve to self-employment. While others get involve in income generating activities some go in for intellectual activities such as counselling or training.

Rare training and literacy opportunities

Despite that they manifest the need for training in certain domains (new information, communication technologies, management of income generating micro-projects, etc.), older persons lack opportunities. Besides alphabetization programs do not always take into consideration the specific needs of older persons living in the rural area of which, the great majority are illiterates.

Social Environment

The social environment of older persons is characterized by difficulties related to accommodation and living space, unfavorable social perception, violence and poor treatment, poverty and an inadequate social protection system.

Perception of older person and the third age

Generally, older persons are looked upon negatively in the society. When they are not referred to as « old and useless», they are simply considered as followers of witchcraft or wizards. It is observed that more and more, youths disrespect them in public places.

Violence and poor treatment

Violence and poor treatment meted on older persons are emerging phenomena taking many forms such as: physical, psychological or financial that manifest in rejection, abandonment by family, witchcraft practice accusations most often accompanied by physical violence, dispossession of personal and real estate by the younger members of their families and home assaults.

Poverty

Older persons, who once had paid jobs and benefitted from retirement pension, still face difficulties to survive. This is due to the moderateness of pensions or their social burdens. Older persons in the rural world, when they cannot produce or generate income become poor, without the support of their children or people of goodwill. Furthermore, others find themselves with many members of their families to cater for, without appropriate resources due to polygamy, family solidarity and HIV/AIDS ravages.

3) The data, statistics and research available regarding older person's contribution to sustainable development

Equality and non-discrimination

4) The measures taken to eliminate ageism, ageist stereotypes, prejudices and behaviors that devalue older persons' contribution to sustainable development are:

- Accompany older persons in putting in place leading associations or networks;
- Promote voluntary services to older persons;

- Take into consideration the problem of ageing in school programs and in all levels of education;
- Strengthen intergenerational solidarity;
- Promote mutual aid actions between generations;
- Put in place platforms for interaction between persons in active service, future workers and older persons;
- Put in place mechanisms to valorize and follow-up the competence of older persons;
- Public symbolic acknowledgement of seniors aged a century
- Facilitate access to loans, income generation activities, markets and capital by older persons.

Remedies and redress

5) The mechanisms necessary or already put in place for older persons to lodge complaints and seek redress for denial of their rights to participate in and contribute to sustainable development are:

- Adoption of a law on the protection and promotion of older persons and enabling instruments;
- Elaboration of periodic reports for the implementation of policy document;
- Creation of a National policy and consultation framework;
- Implementation of public institutions for older persons care delivery including those needing special protection (older persons with disabilities; older persons in conflict with the law, older persons in emergency situation or in armed conflicts...)
- Capacity building of public and private structures for older persons' care delivery.