

Focus areas of the XII Session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Aging

Focus area 1: Contribution of older persons to sustainable development

National legal and policy framework

The Dominican Republic has provisions and regulations that establish measures for sustainable development, aimed at guaranteeing human rights, enshrined mainly in the Dominican Constitution, Law 352-98 on Protection of the Elderly and Law 1-12 of the National Strategy for Development 2030.

Regarding the guarantee of the rights of older adults to participate and contribute to sustainable development, the Dominican Constitution establishes in a generic way, free participation and without any type of discrimination in activities that promote sustainable development such as: right to freedom of association, assembly and freedom to expression and information.

Likewise, the Dominican State encourages and guarantees the participation of civil society, through the provisions of the Dominican Constitution and Law 122-05 and its implementing regulations, which regulate the Non-Profit Associations (ASFL) that work in collaboration with civil society, the State and other national and international entities to improve the quality of life of older adults and raise their voice.

This is one of the main good practices to guarantee the participation and contribution of older persons in development, since participating in the activities offered by NPOs, and their inclusion in social programs allows them to contribute their experiences, expose their recommendations and socialize them to create initiatives that contribute to sustainable development.

Among the challenges faced by older persons to realize their right to contribute to sustainable development at the national and international levels, we can highlight that, at the national level, this population sector faces low coverage in social protection, which maintains to the vulnerable population, with limited economic resources, and with little capacity to participate actively in society, being one of the great challenges facing the Dominican Republic. Likewise, older adults face life cycle challenges such as illness, disability, dependency and age discrimination for access to some rights, such as the right to work.

All of these are challenges when it comes to older adults empowering themselves over their

contribution to sustainable development and being able to integrate into the process. In addition, aspects such as communication, which reflect a high degree of stigmatization on the subject, persist in giving a passive and vulnerable treatment to this population, thus ensuring that their capacity to contribute to sustainable development is not made visible.

This indicates that a process of empowerment of the population must be worked on, which is linked to the responsiveness of the States to the needs of this sector, as well as the interest in participation of this population and social integration, receptivity and empathy towards them.

Available data and statistics

Currently there are no specific studies or research on the contribution of older persons to sustainable development, however, considering the variables that sustainable development encompasses, we must highlight that CONAPE manages a vegetable garden program, where older adults are trained for this economic activity, compatible with the environment and that at the same time allows them to stay active in their community. By 2021, 436 garden training services were offered, through which they have harvested their own food products used in the nursing homes that produce these crops.

Equality and non-discrimination

The Dominican Republic, through CONAPE, implements various measures to eliminate age discrimination and stereotypes, prejudices and behaviors that devalue the contribution of older persons to sustainable development, such as:

- Promotion of the fundamental rights established in Law 352-98 on the Protection of the Elderly
- Promote the participation of the elderly in all sectors of society
- Awareness of the rights of older persons, that they are bearers of rights.

Remedies and Repair

CONAPE has a Department of Complaints and Follow-up of cases, through which complaints of all types of abuse, mistreatment and discrimination committed against older adults are received. Likewise, the prosecutor's office specializing in violence against the elderly works hand to hand with this unit to prioritize reported cases.

Regarding compensation in cases of denial of rights to participate and contribute to sustainable development, there is no mechanism to compensate for the violation of a right that has been violated.

There are remedies for the violation of fundamental rights protected in the Dominican Constitution, but it is necessary to have a mechanism that provides compensation for the denial of a right.

Focus Area 2: Economic Security

National legal and political framework

In the Dominican Republic, economic, social and cultural rights are enshrined in the Dominican Constitution, within which we can highlight rights that guarantee an adequate standard of living for the elderly population, such as: the right to food security, right to a family, the protection of the elderly, the right to housing, health, work, education, culture, sports, among others.

Likewise, Law 352-98 on the Protection of the Elderly enshrines rights such as the right to education, culture and recreation, the right to social welfare, the right to employment and income generation, the right to health and nutrition, right to housing, security, respect and dignity, among others.

As far as poverty is concerned, the Dominican Republic's official measure of this, and with which the country is compared internationally, is Monetary Poverty. The Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development (MEPyD), defines it as the situation in which a deficit prevails with respect to the amount of resources, represented by the income considered necessary for a person to acquire a minimum food basket for consumption and other necessities (other than food) considered essential; that is, clothing, footwear, housing, home care, health, education, transportation, among others.

The methodology implemented for the measurement of poverty is determined on the basis of three inputs: a) the well-being indicator, defined from the disposable income in households; b) the Basic Food Basket (CBA); and c) the Non-Food Basic Basket (CBNA).

Another methodology used for these purposes, proposed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), is that of Unsatisfied Basic Needs (UBN), which proposes the establishment of six deficiencies and defines as poor those households that present at least one of them. In our country, in the definition of the NBI for 2014, fifteen shortcomings were defined, which include the six conventional NBI of ECLAC and another nine that are adjusted to the Dominican reality.

The Quality of Life Index (ICV) is another methodology that is used in the country as the main measure of deficiencies. This methodology makes it possible to target the programs that are managed by the Dominican State, with the aim of reducing the social gaps caused by poverty. It also makes it possible to carry out a logical ordering of households and people, from the most deprived, identified as ICV 1, to the least deprived, represented by ICV 4.

Finally, work began for the adoption of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (IPM) by the Single System of Beneficiaries (SIUBEN), as a new measurement of poverty in the Dominican Republic, which arises from the knowledge that this problem is not only related with income (called monetary poverty), but there are multiple factors that influence a household or a person to be poor, and even more, these factors can perpetuate said condition and reproduce it in a vicious circle that crosses generations.

Regarding data, statistics and research available on older people living in poverty, we do not have a specific study of poverty in this population, but we can highlight some reports that include this sector, such as: the Statistics Bulletins Monetary Poverty Officers, study on the Multidimensional Poverty Index of the Dominican Republic.

In relation to the challenges faced by older people living in poverty, we consider that currently aspects of the design of the social protection system represent challenges for older adults. The transition to retirement and widowhood reduce income adjusted for needs and increase the probability of poverty in this population, this is obviously associated with age, but also with the characteristics of each person and their generations, how their working life and their accumulation of assets. Economic security in the elderly has been debated for a long time, and ECLAC has concluded that economic participation, social security and family support are the mechanisms that generate this economic security in the population.

What happens is that in the Dominican Republic the high labor participation of this population is related to the poor coverage of the social security system, which forces them to continue working to survive, but also the design of the system forces them to leave it, dividing the life cycle in two: active age and passive age. Retirement itself becomes a challenge for this population.

The poorest older adults in general are women, widows and who in turn have a role in caring for grandchildren, which does not allow them to perform paid work, since care is not recognized as paid work. Nor will they receive a decent pension to cover their needs.

It is for this reason that poverty is the greatest obstacle to decent and safe aging. Since it is the moment when they most need a robust health system and economic coverage to sustain themselves and the social structure does not allow it. In unfavorable contexts, older people become particularly vulnerable, and the risk of falling into poverty may be higher in this age group, since their income-earning capacity is lower and the return on their human capital is comparatively low.

One of the most complex challenges that exists is to guarantee social security for this population sector in the short term in terms of reinforcing the current sources of income in old age. The weak coverage and the low amount of pension they receive are historical debts and challenges for societies to move

towards non- discrimination based on age.

Another challenge is that many households with a composition where there are older adults support other members of the household, who prepare for their autonomy in income, however, once they are autonomous, they leave the home and that income goes to another household. So the economic cycle of the household is directly related to its incidence of poverty in old age.

Finally, the biological factor, autonomy and dependency in the elderly is a challenge for the integration of the elderly in society since requiring formal support and care and not having the capacity to receive it not only increases poverty in the population but it also impairs their quality of life.

The challenges are framed in: 1-Increasing social security coverage, 2-Improving the employability of older people (this being one of the main causes of discrimination) and 3- Creating social services in favor of adult autonomy higher.

Progressive realization and maximum use of available resources

In relation to the above, the Dominican Government has had different programs and projects in favor of reducing poverty in this population and addressing economic insecurity, and which in turn serve as good practices to guarantee economic security in the elderly. From the National Council for the Aging Person (CONAPE), the following programs are implemented:

1. **The Program for the Protection of the Elderly in Extreme Poverty (PROVEE)**, cash transfer program of RD\$400 per month (USD\$9) aimed at poor households that have people over 65 who do not receive a pension or work.
2. **Solidarity Pensions** granted by the President of the Republic, granting an amount of RD\$6,000.00 (US\$110) per month to older adults who did not contribute to social security.
3. **Program TE AMA**. This is a monthly monetary subsidy of RD\$600 (equivalent to USD10.2), prioritizing elderly people with health problems or disabilities in the adjudication of the benefit, who have not yet been able to acquire a solidarity pension.
4. **Donation delivery program**. Through which supplies are offered for their basic needs. Support devices, food rations, proteins, hygiene kits, among others.

5. **Medication delivery program.** This program provides medications that are not covered by health insurance or to older adults who do not have health insurance.
6. **Day homes.** public establishment, private and/or non-profit associations, which They offer direct care services for the elderly from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., such as: food, health, education, recreation, training and all services aimed at promoting comprehensive care for the elderly.

In relation to the macroeconomic policies of the Dominican Republic on poverty and the economy, in the Multi annual Plan of the Public Sector 2021-2024, they have been addressed transversally for all population groups, and in particular we can identify:

- Guarantee the universal coverage of health insurance, pensions and labor risks of the population, as well as the coverage of the beneficiary population of solidarity pensions according to the protection standards established in Law 87-01.
- Increase in the rate of pension coverage in the population aged 60 and over and the percentage of the economically active population protected with the Old Age, Disability and Survival Insurance.
- Increase in the average monthly income of pensioners aged 60 and over for pension

Equality and non-discrimination

Regarding measures to eliminate ageism and discrimination based on age that prevent older people from accessing economic and productive resources, we can say that currently in our country the Happy Family National Housing Plan is being implemented as an initiative of the Dominican State, developed with the aim of implementing a system with public and private institutions for the generation of housing solutions, thus creating a comprehensive synergy with the aim of achieving safety, health, quality of life and family well-being through access to housing worthy. People from the most vulnerable groups, including older adults, have access to it.

Among the main measures is also the empowerment plan on law 352-98, through which the entire population is educated through CONAPE, day homes, ASFL and permanent centers on the rights of the elderly contemplated in the law 352-98 on protection of the elderly. This with the purpose of empowering both the older adult and society on the subject, which will reduce age discrimination.