

Reference material
on “Contribution of Older Persons to Sustainable Development”
and “Economic Security” for the 12th Session of the Open-ended
Working Group on Ageing for the purpose of strengthening
the protection of the human rights of older persons
April 11-14, 2022

“Contribution of Older Persons to Sustainable Development”

1. *What are the legal provisions, policy frameworks in your country that recognize older persons’ right to participate in and contribute to sustainable development? This could include, but is not limited to:*

a) ensuring that relevant human rights (in particular the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the right of access to information, and the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association) are protected and implemented;

b) protecting and enhancing civic space and collaboration with civil society that represents the voices of older persons in sustainable development;

c) good practices to ensure older persons' participation in, and contribution to sustainable development.

a) Article 19 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation guarantees the equality of human and civil rights and freedoms regardless of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, material and official status, place of residence, attitude to religion, convictions, membership of public associations, or of other circumstances including age.

The legislation of the Russian Federation that specifies the exercise of fundamental human rights, including the right to freedom of opinion and its expression, the right to access to information, the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, the right to freedom of conscience, does not stipulate an age limit.

In order to comprehensively improve the quality of life of the elderly people and to encourage their involvement in all spheres of socio-political life, the Action Plan for the Benefit of Senior Citizens until 2025 (hereafter – Action Plan) adopted by the Government Decree of February 5, 2016 No. 164-p, is being implemented.

The Action Plan contains goals, objectives and directions of state policy, the implementation of which aims to improve the quality of life of the elderly taking into account their individual needs as well as to more effectively utilize their potential and social contribution.

b, c) State bodies of the Russian Federation offer comprehensive assistance to civil society institutions activities of which concern the promotion and protection of the rights of elderly people. This cooperation aims predominantly at resolving social issues of such persons as well as at monitoring the observance of their legal rights.

In the Russian Federation, the following institutions are established:

Presidential Commission on Veterans’ Affairs;

Section “Senior Generation” of the Council for Social Welfare of the Government of the Russian Federation;

Russian Organizing Committee “Victory”;

Likewise, also operational are various All-Russian, regional, city and district organizations of pensioners and veterans.

One of the areas within the first stage of implementation of the Action Plan is the creation of a comprehensive system of support for the development of volunteer activities of senior citizens to unleash their personal and professional potential.

In 2020, the regional senior volunteer centers “Young at Heart” engaged 59,6 thousand senior volunteers, provided assistance to 240 thousand beneficiaries, implemented 3,2 thousand socially beneficial events in 47 regions of the Russian Federation, and involved 266 partner organizations.

2. What are the challenges faced by older persons for the realization of their right to contribute to sustainable development at national and international levels?

The widespread shift to digital platforms actualizes the topic of “Digital Literacy” of the elderly. To this end, Russia is implementing measures aimed at ensuring that older persons become full members of the modern information community.

One of the largest campaigns for training pensioners is being conducted by the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation (hereafter – PFR). The training program for pensioners “Internet ABC”, initiated by the PFR and Russia’s largest provider of digital services and solutions, PJSC Rostelecom, has become widespread.

In support of the “Internet ABC”, an annual competition called “Thanks to the Internet!” was organized. The participants in their works talk about how the Internet is useful to an audience of 50+, how it has changed and improved their lives. Participants of the VI All-Russian competition in 2020, despite the difficult conditions of the pandemic and self-isolation for pensioners, submitted 4,441 works from 77 regions of Russia.

Related programs and courses are also being implemented at the level of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. So, for example, since 2019, the Moscow Longevity government project includes classes “Computer for pensioners”. The acquired knowledge and skills allow older people to adapt socially in the context of society's shift to e-government services.

3. What data, statistics and research are available regarding older persons’ contribution to sustainable development?

According to the Voluntary National Review of Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (hereafter – National Review) prepared by the Analytical Center of the Government of the Russian Federation in 2020, 12 national projects and the Complex Plan of Modernization and Expansion of Backbone Infrastructure directly or indirectly addressed 107 of the 169 targets identified in the Sustainable Development Goals.

These national projects are currently being updated to comply with the 2030 Development Goals approved by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of July 21, 2020, including those related to the health and well-being of the elderly, adequate productive employment, and successful entrepreneurship.

4. What measures are being taken to eliminate ageism, ageist stereotypes, prejudices and behaviors that devalue older persons' contribution to sustainable development?

Elderly people living in the Russian Federation enjoy great potential and continue to lead an active lifestyle. There were 33,804,000 pensioners registered with the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation as of October 1, 2021, including 8,412,595 working pensioners.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation advocates the introduction of indexation of pensions for working pensioners. We believe that such indexation is a fair and necessary measure. Indeed, the continued work after retirement age is often connected both with the small amount of old-age insurance pensions and the shortage of qualified specialists, which increases the demand for professionals of advanced age.

5. What mechanisms are necessary, or already in place, for older persons to lodge complaints and seek redress for denial of their right to participate in and contribute to sustainable development?

The right to submit individual and joint appeals to state bodies and bodies of local self-government is enshrined in:

Article 33 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation;

Federal Law No. 59-FZ of May 2, 2006 “On the Procedure for Reviewing Appeals of Citizens of the Russian Federation”.

Additional safeguards for the fulfillment of this right are stipulated in Federal Constitutional Law No. 1-FKZ of February 26, 1997 “On the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation”, and Federal Law No. 48-FZ of March 18, 2020 “On Commissioners for Human Rights in the Constituent Entities of the Russian Federation”.

“Economic Security”

1. What are the legal provisions and policy frameworks in your country that guarantees the minimum essential level of the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, in particular the right to an adequate standard of living?

In accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation, senior citizens are guaranteed social rights and freedoms equal to those of all Russian citizens.

In particular:

Article 39 provides for social security on the basis of age in case of illness, disability, loss of a provider, for raising children, and in other cases established by law;

Article 41 – the right to protection of health and free medical care in state and municipal institutions;

Article 43 – accessibility and free access to education in state and municipal educational institutions regardless of sex, race, nationality, religion, age, etc.;

Article 44 – involvement in the cultural life of society.

There are a number of privileges for the elderly stipulated by law.

For example, under Federal Law No. 178-FZ of July 17, 1999 “On State Social Assistance” low-income families, low-income single citizens and other categories of citizens who, for reasons beyond their control, have an average per capita income below the

subsistence minimum set in the relevant constituent entity of the Russian Federation, may be entitled to State social assistance.

The main focus in the sphere of social support for elderly citizens is the system of social services for citizens, created in accordance with Federal Law No. 442-FZ of December 20, 2013 “On the Fundamentals of Social Services for Citizens of the Russian Federation”, providing social domestic, social-medical, social-legal, social-psychological and other social services to those in need of them.

The sociocultural rights of elderly citizens are set forth in the laws “On Education in the Russian Federation”, “On Librarianship”, “On the Museum Fund of the Russian Federation and Museums in the Russian Federation”, and “On the Basics of Tourism Activities in the Russian Federation”.

2. How is poverty defined in the national policy framework?

The Government of the Russian Federation has approved the Rules for Determining the Poverty Level for the Russian Federation and the Constituent Entities of the Russian Federation, which are used in assessing the “poverty level” (Resolution No. 2049 of November 26, 2021 of the Government of the Russian Federation).

The initial threshold of poverty is set at the level of the last calculated subsistence minimum on the basis of a consumer goods basket. The subsistence minimum for Q4 2020 was last used, being adjusted quarterly according to the rate of inflation.

From 2021 a new model for calculating the subsistence minimum and the minimum wage will be used. Their calculation is based not on the food basket, but on the average per capita median income and median wage.

When calculating the “poverty level” instead of the subsistence minimum, which is now set in relation to the median income¹, a new indicator – the “poverty line” will be used, which will reflect price fluctuations.

At the same time, the “poverty line” does not affect the assignment of social support measures, for the calculation of which the subsistence level will continue to be used.

In other words, the need for social support measures will be determined on the basis of whether the income of a citizen exceeds the minimum subsistence level or not. The amount of benefits will also be calculated on the basis of the subsistence minimum.

3. What are challenges faced by older persons living in poverty, including the impact of intersectional discrimination and inequality based on age, gender and other grounds?

The Constitution of the Russian Federation and federal laws and legal acts of the Russian Federation on its basis, as well as legislative acts of constituent entities of the Russian Federation prohibit discrimination on any grounds, including age.

4. What data, statistics and research are available regarding older persons living in poverty?

¹ The median per capita income is a value, the income above and below which half of the country's population has.

According to the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat), the median income in 2020 was 27,036 rubles, which is 2.5% higher than in 2019 and 1.6% higher than projected values.

The Federal State Statistics Service (“Rosstat”) is responsible for generating official statistical information, including the definition of poverty level and the number of people with an income below the poverty line.

According to “Rosstat”, 11% of the total population in Russia is considered to be living in poverty as of Q3 2021².

5. What steps have been taken to address economic insecurity and poverty in older age and to ensure the right to an adequate standard of living for older persons?

The priority actions to be taken to implement the second stage of the Action Plan for 2021 – 2025 are as follows: the application of a proactive mechanism for assigning and paying pensions, as well as additional social payments to them; monitoring of compliance with the legislation on protection of the rights of workers of pre-retirement and retirement age; organization of training and additional professional education for senior citizens.

A deduction from land tax (tax deduction) serves as a state guarantee aimed at ensuring the right of the elderly to own and use land plots.

Citizens of retirement age, as well as other citizens of Russia, can apply for subsidies for payment of housing and utilities services if their income is low. The main condition for that is that the amount of payment for housing and utilities must amount to more than 22% of a citizen’s income.

With regard to payments for utilities, seniors (80 years and older) are given the opportunity to pay for utilities with a 50% discount.

Additionally, there are established compensations on fees on major building repairs. According to the law, budgets of the constituent entities must compensate 50% of such fees to persons over 70 years old, and fully exempt persons over 80 years old from paying them.

6. What is the impact of macroeconomic policies on economic insecurity and poverty among older persons and vice versa? What policy options are available and/or implemented in order to expand fiscal space and maximize available resources to ensure economic security and the right to an adequate standard of living for older persons?

Macroeconomic instability requires the development of economic policies, both at the level of the Russian Federation and at the level of its regions. Such policies aim to achieve stabilization of production and price level to one that corresponds to a situation of full employment and maximum use of production possibilities, creating social benefits and eliminating the consequences of economic downturns.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected and continues to affect the economies of all countries of the world. The Russian Federation was the first of the world's major economies to succeed in normalizing its fiscal policy during the pandemic.

In particular, in Russia, during the peak of the pandemic in 2020, targeted financial assistance was provided to many economic entities whose activities were seriously affected by the imposed restrictions, employers of which were obliged to pay full salaries to their employees, despite the shutdown of many enterprises.

The government of the Russian Federation proposed and implemented a range of state support measures to minimize the damage from the pandemic in key industries and the social

² URL: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/313/document/145625> (access date: 14.02.2022)

sphere. In March 2020, a Plan of Priority Measures (Actions) was approved to ensure sustainable economic development in conditions of worsening situation due to the spread of this new coronavirus infection.

A draft Nationwide Action Plan was also developed to ensure the recovery of employment and incomes, economic growth and long-term structural transformation. According to the Recovery Plan, about five trillion rubles were allocated to support the national economy and population in 2020-2021.

In addition, due to the pandemic in 2020 a number of additional measures were taken in the sphere of social security of citizens: the procedure for application to employment agencies for citizens who lost their jobs was significantly simplified, insurance and social payments were accrued automatically, without application.

Russian Federation pays special attention to the elderly, pensioners, and families with children. Significant support is provided within the framework of the All-Russian campaign of mutual aid “#WeAreTogether”, which unites commercial companies, public organizations and activists in the fight against the spread of the coronavirus infection. Volunteers deliver medicines and food, lawyers and psychologists provide free consultations to those in need (most of whom are elderly people), and thousands of partners of the campaign provide assistance by providing their services and goods.

7. What good practices are available in terms of ensuring older persons' economic security, including through a life-course approach?

The Action Plan for the Benefit of Senior Citizens until 2025 is aimed at ensuring state support for senior citizens and was developed in order to increase the economic security of senior citizens, including using a life-course approach.

In the Report on the activities of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation for 2017, the problem of levying penalties on pensions and other income of citizens within the framework of enforcement proceedings was raised, in connection with which the High Commissioner proposed to amend Article 99 of Federal Law No. 229-FZ of October 2, 2007 “On Enforcement Proceedings” to limit the amount of monthly levies from pensioners so that after deduction there remains an amount not less than the subsistence minimum.

These proposals are reflected in the provisions of Federal Law № 234-FZ of June 29, 2021 “On Amending Article 446 of the Code of Civil Procedure of the Russian Federation and the Federal Law ‘On Enforcement Proceedings’” (entered into force February 1, 2022), which fixes preservation of wages and other income of a debtor-citizen in the amount of the living wage in the Russian Federation as a principle of enforcement proceedings and provides for its implementation.

These innovations are designed to resolve this problem, to protect the interests of citizens-debtors of the older generation, while maintaining the minimum level of their income that is necessary for their livelihood.

Moreover, Federal Law No 289-FZ of 31 July 2020 “On Amendments to the Federal Law ‘On Insolvency (Bankruptcy)’ and Individual Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation Regarding Extrajudicial Bankruptcy of a Citizen” entered into force on September 1, 2020. It introduced extrajudicial bankruptcy of a citizen as a new legal institute in the Russian legislation. The amendments primarily concern people who have small debts,

in particular, pensioners, but do not have an opportunity to repay them. The bankruptcy procedure was simplified.

8. *What measures are being taken to eliminate ageism and discrimination based on age that prevent older persons to access economic and other productive resources, including financial services, land, adequate housing and the right to inheritance?*

Federal Law No. 352-FZ of October 3, 2018 “On Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation” establishes criminal liability for unjustified refusal to hire a person on the grounds of reaching the pre-retirement age, as well as unjustified dismissal of such a person from work on the same grounds.

9. *What mechanisms are necessary, or already in place, for older persons to lodge complaints and seek redress for denial of their economic security and enjoyment of the right to an adequate standard of living?*

This question is answered in part under question 5 on older people’s contributions to sustainable development.

It should be added that the right to submit individual and collective appeals to the state authorities and local self-government bodies is stipulated in Article 33 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation as well as in a special Federal Law No. 59-FZ of May 2, 2006 “On the procedure of consideration of appeals of citizens of the Russian Federation”.

An additional guarantee of the implementation of this right is the activities of the High Commissioner on Human Rights in the Russian Federation and the Commissioners for Human Rights in the Constituent Entities of the Russian Federation acting pursuant to Federal Constitutional Law No. 1-FKZ of February 26, 1997 “On the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation” and Federal Law No. 48-FZ of March 18, 2020 “On Commissioners for Human Rights in the Constituent Entities of the Russian Federation”. Each year they review about 230,000-250,000 appeals.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation