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ETHIOPIAN HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION

**Responses to the OEWGA Questionnaire:
Gaps Identified in the Protection of the Human Rights
of Older Persons and How Best to Address them.**

November 2023
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Background

The Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, in its decision 13/1 adopted at the thirteenth session, requested the co-facilitators to submit proposed intergovernmental negotiated recommendations to be considered at the fourteenth session of the Working Group and to be presented for consideration by the General Assembly, in accordance with resolution 77/190, regarding the existing international framework of the human rights of older persons and possible gaps, and options on how best to address them. The purpose of this questionnaire is meant to facilitate the consideration of the existing international framework of the human rights of older persons and the identification of possible gaps in the protection of the human rights of older persons and how best to address them. The questionnaire will be sent to all States Members of the United Nations, observers in the General Assembly, A-status National Human Rights Institutions, non-governmental organizations with ECOSOC Status and previously accredited organizations to the Working Group, as well as United Nations Funds, Programmes, Specialized Agencies, and other UN Entities.

About Ethiopian Human Rights Commission

Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is an independent federal state body established as per the Federal Constitution and reporting to House of People's Representatives as a national human rights institution with the mandate for promotion and protection of human rights. (*Article 55/14 of FDRE Constitution cum Proclamation No. 210/2000, as amended by Proclamation No. 1224/2020*)

THE QUESTIONS

I. Identification of Gaps

1. For each of the topics that have been considered by the Open-ended Working Group since its eighth session, please state possible gaps your Government /organization has identified in the normative framework and practical implementation for the protection of the human rights of older persons.

a) Equality and Non-discrimination

Equality and non-discrimination are fundamental human rights principles that ensure that all people are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their age, gender, disability, or other factors. However, in Ethiopia, older persons face various gaps and challenges that prevent them from enjoying equality and non-discrimination, and that expose them to discrimination, exclusion, and marginalization, due to their age, disability, gender, or other intersecting factors. Some of these gaps and challenges include:

There is no sufficient legal protection in Ethiopia that explicitly prohibits discrimination based on age. The [Federal Constitution](#) does not explicitly prohibit discrimination based on age; and hence it is only by interpreting the phrase “other status”¹ that the non-discrimination and equality rights of older persons are guaranteed by the Constitution. Among the core international human rights instruments that Ethiopia has ratified², only [the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(Articles 11e and 14\)](#), and the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(Articles 25 sub b and 28.2.b\)](#) mention older persons and enshrine a prohibition of discrimination in the enjoyment of the rights set out in each Convention based on age. However, the rights of older persons protected in these human rights instruments require the older person in question to be a woman or a person with a disability.

In this regard, Ethiopia has ratified a [Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa](#) which explicitly prohibits all forms of discrimination against older persons and recognizes other fundamental human rights. Unfortunately, [this protocol has not yet entered into force](#) due to inadequate number of ratifications.

Thus, the lack of adequate legal protection and institutional frameworks to protect older persons from discriminatory practices is one of the major challenges identified in this aspect. Related to Institutional frameworks, both at federal and regional levels, the issue of older persons is merged with other vulnerable groups and practically it is given the lowest attention among all others.

¹ Article 25 of the FDRE Constitution

² All international agreements ratified by Ethiopia are an integral part of the law of the land, Article 9 *sub* 4 of the FDRE Constitution

Moreover, there is a tendency to link older persons' issues solely with social protection related rights and no or less attention is given to other forms of discriminatory practices.

Ageism and age-based discrimination are also challenges faced by older persons in Ethiopia. This is due to the misconception that older persons are unable to work and contribute effectively. Older persons who are still productive and desirous of staying in their formal jobs are discriminated against, as the pension proclamation establishes a legal retirement age of 60 with no exceptions, for both private and government employees in the formal employment sector. Additionally, older persons seeking to engage in informal employment and start their own businesses face discrimination when attempting to secure financial loans from microfinance institutions.

b) Violence, Neglect and Abuse

These kinds of human rights violations take various forms, including physical, sexual, psychological, or financial and they could also take place in a variety of places, most often in private settings and within relationships with expectation of trust. However, the lack of normative frameworks regulating elder abuse, neglect, and violence has resulted to injustice where cases of abuse, neglect and abuse are left unaddressed.

Moreover, though there are some national laws, including the criminal law of Ethiopia that stipulate aggravated punishment whenever criminal acts are committed against elderly persons,³ the law doesn't recognize and criminalize violence, abuse, and neglect of the elderly as stated above. Thus, the act is only penalized whenever all the criminal elements are fulfilled and most of the time related to physical violence.

From the perspective of practical implementation of the existing laws and policies, the lack of reliable and comprehensive data on the prevalence, causes, consequences, and risk factors of elder abuse, neglect, and violence, especially in situations of humanitarian emergencies and crises is one of the most important gaps identified. Moreover, the lack of public awareness and recognition of elder abuse as a human rights violation and social problem that affects the wellbeing and dignity of older persons is another gap. As a result of lack of public awareness on this issue, most of society, including the victims and perpetrators do not even differentiate acceptable acts and attitudes from those that are abusive. Hence, though their actions/omissions could fall on actions/omissions that violate the rights of older persons, they normalize it and repeatedly continue to do it without any kind of legal consequences.

Whilst lack of effective and coordinated legal, policy and institutional mechanisms to prevent, detect, report, investigate and respond to the problem is another challenge, added to this is the lack of adequate and accessible support and resources for older victims and survivors of abuse, violence, and neglect.

³ Article 84 *sub-1/e*, Article 557 *sub-2*, and Article 565

c) Long-term Care and Palliative Care (LTC and PC)

The Ethiopian Constitution under Article 41(5) stipulates the elements of palliative care by stating that the state shall, within available means, allocate resources to provide rehabilitation and assistance to the physically and mentally disabled, the aged, and to children who are left without parents or guardian.

Ethiopia has a national Palliative Care Guideline developed by the Federal Ministry of Health in 2016, and thus palliative care is explicitly recognized in the country's health care policy and health sector transformation plan as a fifth pillar, alongside primary health promotion, prevention, curative, and rehabilitation. Be it as it may, the major gaps identified in this aspect include:

Lack of formal long-term care systems: Ethiopia does not have a formal system of long-term care for older persons who need assistance with daily activities or have chronic health conditions. There are few residential facilities or home-based care services for elders, and most of them are run by Non-Governmental Organizations, or religious organizations with limited resource and capacity.

Lack of awareness and knowledge: there is no sufficient awareness and knowledge among the public, policymakers, and service providers in Ethiopia, about the rights, needs, and contributions of older persons, and about the benefits and principles of LTC and PC.

Lack of human and material resources is also another challenge in Ethiopia as the country does not have sufficient human and material resources to provide LTC and PC to older persons, especially older women. The existing human resources, such as health and social workers, are often insufficient, untrained, or unsupported, to provide LTC and PC to older persons, who have complex and diverse needs.

d) Autonomy and Independence

There are no legally binding national laws in Ethiopia that directly addresses older persons and recognize their autonomy to make decisions by themselves. However, Article 5 of the African Protocol requires States Parties to promulgate laws that “recognize the rights of Older Persons to make decisions regarding their own well-being without undue interference from any person or entity, and that Older Persons have the right to appoint a party of their choice to carry out their wishes and instructions” (Sub-article 1).

As it stands, the practical implementation of autonomy and independence of older people is highly affected by the respect or otherwise of all other rights including non-discrimination, equality, social security, education, capacity building, etc. Hence, all the gaps identified in these areas hinder the practical enjoyment of autonomy and independence by older persons.

Moreover, economic freedom plays a vital role in the independence and autonomy of older persons, however older persons economic freedom is highly limited for various reasons for

instance, most of older persons in Ethiopia do not have any formal pension and rely on the support of their family or community due to their past engagement in informal employment setting. Moreover, absence of universal social scheme and lack of public income support also limits the economic freedom of older persons.

Lack of awareness and respect for the rights of older persons is one also major gap that affects autonomy. Older persons face discrimination and abuse, both within and outside the family, are often excluded from decision-making processes and denied access to basic services. Thus, there is a need to raise awareness and promote respect for the dignity, autonomy, and independence of older persons.

e) **Social Security and Social Protection**

Currently, there are two pension schemes in Ethiopia: The Public Servants' Pension Scheme and Private Sector Organizations Employees' Pension Scheme. The regulations governing public employees' pensions and private sector pensions are identical, but private sector pensions are administered by a separate agency. The Public Servants' Pension Scheme is managed by the Federal Public Servants Social Security Agency (PSSSA), while the private sector scheme is managed by the Federal Private Sector Organizations Employees' Social Security Agency (PSOESSA). Both the pension scheme and the legal framework surrounding it have significant gaps that need to be addressed. Some of these gaps include:

Absence of a universal social pension scheme: Ethiopia doesn't have any non-contributory social pension scheme. Hence many older persons are out of regular and reliable income support in their old age. Ethiopia does not also have a comprehensive and integrated social protection system. The two pension schemes the Public Servants' Pension Scheme and Private Sector Organizations Employees' Pension Scheme makes the social protection system fragmented and complex with multiple actors, programs, and funding sources. This leads to duplication, inefficiency and gaps in the coverage and quality of the social protection.

The implementation of the pay-as-you-go principle: the pension scheme has created a significant gap that hinders the rights of older persons to receive their pensions in a flexible and timely manner. Under this principle, the current active workforce contributes to the pension fund, and these contributions are used to pay the pensions of retired persons. While this system ensures that retirees receive financial support, it has its own drawback. This drawback is manifested in one of the conflict areas and due to the two-year war in that region, the state government was unable to collect and forward the pension contributions to the federal government. As a result, the pensioners have been deprived of their overdue pensions, causing severe hardships, and pushing many into poverty. This situation has greatly affected the livelihoods of older persons in the area, leaving them unable to support themselves adequately.

Also, the fact that only around 15 percent of Ethiopia's older persons are currently receiving social protection, many older persons are not covered by any social protection intervention is another

serious gap. Even those small fractions of the labor force from the formal sector who are covered by the pension scheme (both from the public servant and employees of private organizations) receive a low and inadequate coverage that do not reflect the cost of living and inflation rates.

As a social protection scheme the government has taken some steps to address economic insecurity and poverty in older age and to some extent to ensure the right to an adequate standard of living for older persons. These are the urban and rural SafetyNet programs designed under the Safety Net System for the Poorest.

Older persons in Ethiopia do not have adequate awareness, especially older women, about their rights, entitlements, and opportunities to social security and social protection. They often lack the information, education, and communication that are relevant, accurate, timely, and accessible for them to know and claim their rights and benefits.

f) Education, Training, Lifelong learning, and Capacity-building

Education at an older age – as well as life-long learning, training, capacity building – plays an important role in the social participation and preservation of autonomy for older persons. Older persons have the right to life-long learning and education free from discrimination, and this right encompasses vocational training, retraining, digital education, recreational/community-based education, and education in information and communication technologies.

There are no specific provisions for older persons in the Constitution of Ethiopia or any other national laws and policies on education in general that strongly guarantee the right to education, training, or life learning of older persons. Hence, lack of legal or programmatic establishment of adult education and education for older persons in Ethiopia is one of the major gaps identified in this aspect. Additionally, the Education Development Roadmap of Ethiopia (2018-2030) does not mention the specific challenges and opportunities of older persons in accessing and benefiting from education and training.

The implementation of the existing education and training policy and programs is hampered by various factors, such as lack of resources, coordination, capacity, and awareness. There is also a huge gap between the policy and the practice of inclusive education, as many older persons face barriers and discrimination in accessing quality education and training. The negative attitude and misconceptions in this area also hinder the full and meaningful enjoyment of the right by older persons to education.

g) The Right to Work and Access to the Labor Market

The existing laws and policies in Ethiopia lack sufficient protection for the rights of older persons to work and access the labor market. Despite Article 41 and 42 of the constitution addressing economic and labor rights, there is no specific mention of the rights of older persons to work. However, these articles do state that every Ethiopian has the right to engage in any economic

activity and labor market. Unfortunately, the reality does not align with these constitutional provisions, as there is a no other legislation specifically dealing with this issue in relation to older persons.

Practically, older persons face significant barriers and discrimination when it comes to finding employment or accessing opportunities in the labor market. This not only hinders their ability to earn a livelihood but also deprives society of their valuable skills and contributions. Furthermore, lack of awareness and advocacy on the rights of older persons to work and to access the labor market among the relevant stakeholders, such as the government, the employers, the trade unions, the civil society, and the media is another challenge. This contributes to the persistence of negative stereotypes, attitudes, and practices that undermine the dignity, autonomy, and participation of older persons in the world of work.

In addition to this, the lack of legal or programmatic establishment of adult education and education for older persons mentioned above hinders older persons from acquiring new skills, knowledge, and competencies that are relevant to the changing needs of the labor market. Hence, older persons couldn't be competitive enough to have access to work.

h) Access to Justice

Access to justice is a fundamental human right that is essential for the protection and promotion of other rights. It enables people to seek and obtain a remedy through formal or informal institutions of justice for grievances, in compliance with human rights standards.

The lack of legislation that particularly addresses the right to access to justice for older persons hinders the full enjoyment of the rights. The existence of the law would have given a clear notion of the concept and incorporated some elements to measure implementation.

The Ethiopian law limits the legal capacity of older persons based on senility⁴. Related to this, the major gap identified is that the law neither explicitly defines the concept of senility nor provides the elements of senility. Thus, this gap highly limits the legal capacity of older persons to exercise their rights by giving an opportunity for broader interpretation mandate.

Moreover, there are no specific domestic legal provisions that oblige the government to make proceedings old-age friendly. These have become pertinent in situations where older persons want to initiate a case against their children, relatives, or caregivers, in cases where they are not receiving the normal support they should have received from families or caregivers in normal course of things. Physical accessibility of the justice sectors is one of the major gaps to be mentioned here. The physical environment, transportation and location of justice sectors are not always convenient to older persons. Old buildings with no elevator and/or ramps and inaccessible

⁴ Article 334 of the Civil Code

restrooms and compounds discourage older persons from seeking and obtaining justice. In addition to this attitudinal barrier also hinders the practical implementation of this right.

The weak public legal awareness mechanism which also includes older persons affects the empowerment and participation of older persons in the justice system. The culture by itself also discourages suing family members and hence in many cases older women and men who face different types of violence, neglect and abuse by a close family member opt to live with the pain rather than instituting a case against their children or care givers.

Though the recent free legal aid service strategy adopted by the Ministry of Justice intends to resolve this problem, the existing fragmented, uncoordinated, and inadequate free legal aid service is also another major challenge in this regard.

i) Contribution of Older Persons to Sustainable Development

Older persons are not only beneficiaries of development, but also active agents of change who can contribute to the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. However, there are many normative and practical gaps that hinder the full realization of the potential and rights of older persons in Ethiopia.

There is lack of adequate legal and policy frameworks that recognize and protect the rights of older persons, and that ensure their inclusion and participation in the development process.

This issue is highly linked to other rights of older persons addressed in this questionnaire. For instance, rights related to education and capacity-building training affect the enrolment of older persons in the employment sector, which in turn affects the contribution of older persons in sustainable development. Hence all the gaps identified under those sections also answer this question. *To avoid redundancy, kindly refer to the answers under Equality and non-discrimination, Education, training, lifelong learning, capacity-building, Right to Work and Access to the Labor Market.*

j) Economic Security

There are several normative and practical gaps related to economic security of older persons. *As this issue is also directly linked to the social security and social protection; and Right to Work and Access to the Labor Market please refer to the responses under these sections.*

k) Right to Health and Access to Health Services

Article 41 (5) and 90 (1) of the Constitution recognizes fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to health and access to health care. It states that the State shall, within available means, allocate resources to provide rehabilitation and assistance to older persons and aim to provide all Ethiopians access to public health, clean water, housing, food, and social security.

The National Plan of Action on Older People (2006–2015), the Five-Year Strategic Framework for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (2012), and its Action Plan (2012) are among the most relevant policy documents that could considerably mitigate the problems older persons faced in enjoying their right to health if implemented as envisaged. However, some of the policies' implementation periods have expired, and research indicates that there is an implementation shortfall in programs and policies for older persons.

Furthermore, there is a community-based health insurance and social health insurance system in Ethiopia, however this have limited coverage, affordability, and accessibility for older persons in Ethiopia.

Though older persons have diverse and complex health needs that require comprehensive, integrated, and person-centered health services, the system that Ethiopia is currently following is inadequate to address these needs.

Practically, many older persons are challenged with accessing health services due to poverty, lack of social protection, geographic isolation, disability, low literacy, cultural norms, and preferences. Most of the time older persons must pay out of pocket for their healthcare needs and in most instances older persons who do not have family support cannot afford it and for those who pay, it has a consequence of impoverishing them. Hence, there is a need to expand and strengthen the social health protection system for the older persons, especially for those with chronic and non-communicable diseases.

Older persons also face discrimination, stigma and agism in accessing health care services which in turn affect the quality of care and health outcomes.

n) Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is the process of ensuring that all people, regardless of their differences, have equal opportunities and access to resources and services in society, and it is important for the well-being and dignity of older persons, who may face various forms of discrimination, exclusion, and marginalization due to their age, disability, gender, or other factors.

Due to attitudinal barriers, older persons may face negative stereotypes, prejudice, and stigma in Ethiopia. This may affect their self-esteem, confidence, and participation in social activities. Lack of the necessary skills and knowledge to access and use information, technology, and services that are essential for their well-being and empowerment also hampers older persons' full social inclusion. This is aggravated by the recent developments in Ethiopia where lots of services are requested online using technologies.

Moreover, older persons may face difficulties in accessing and using physical and social infrastructure, such as roads, transport, water, sanitation, housing, energy, and communication, due to the lack of accessibility, affordability, and quality of these facilities. For example, they may

not be able to travel and exercise some of their rights like the right to live in the community, recreation, etc., due to the lack of ramps, handrails, seats, or signals.

m) Accessibility, infrastructure, and habitat

Like many other developing countries, the Ethiopian laws and the practice do not adequately guarantee the enjoyment of accessible infrastructures and habitat for older persons. Older persons in Ethiopia face numerous challenges in the enjoyment of their human rights, including physical barriers, such as inaccessible buildings, transportation, and public spaces.

Barriers and structural challenges often emerge in the context of work, learning opportunities and access to services and resources, because of ageist attitudes, discriminatory laws and policies, underfunding, and lack of accessibility and affordability, among others. This hinders the exercise of other human rights, including the right to an adequate standard of living, especially when adequate and equitable social protection systems are not in place.

Older persons, especially older persons with disabilities, face various challenges due to the inaccessibility of buildings and infrastructures in Ethiopia. This is in turn excluding them from various social, political, and other economic sectors.

n) Participation in the public life and in decision-making processes

Older persons have a right to participate in decision-making processes and must be able to participate in policymaking in a meaningful way. They are, however, often excluded from mainstream policy development processes and face barriers to participation. Moreover, older persons in Ethiopia are most of the time not adequately consulted or involved in the design and implementation of social protection policies and programs that affect their lives, interest, and wellbeing.

Specific gaps identified in this area include:

Lack of national policy and coordination on aging. Ethiopia does not have a comprehensive national policy or strategy on aging, nor a dedicated ministry or agency to oversee and coordinate the issues and needs of older persons. This hampers the development and implementation of effective programs and services, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of their impact.

Older persons are underrepresented and marginalized in the political institutions and processes, such as the parliament, the executive, the judiciary, the civil service, the political parties, the electoral system, and the local governance structures. Older persons, especially older women, have low level of participation and influence in the public decision-making bodies and mechanisms, such as the councils, committees, forums, consultations, and budgeting processes.

Older persons have limited access to and use of information, education, and communication that are relevant, accurate, timely, and accessible for their participation in public life and in decision-

making processes. Older persons, especially older women, in Ethiopia have low levels of literacy, numeracy, and digital skills that hinder their ability to access and use various sources and platforms of information, such as the media, the internet, mobile phones, and social networks. The high dependency level, abuse, violence, and neglect mentioned above also contribute to the inadequate participation and decision-making of older persons.

II. Options on how best to address the gaps.

1. Please state how your Government/Organization has engaged with international and regional human rights mechanisms (for example: universal periodic review (UPR) treaty bodies, special procedures, regional mechanisms), specifically with regard to older persons. (500 words)

Ethiopia has actively engaged with international and regional human rights mechanisms, although its focus on older persons has been limited. Specific to older persons the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, in its various capacities, engages in reporting mechanisms specifically focused on the rights of older persons at both regional and international levels. This includes participation in OEWSGA and working groups in African and UN contexts. The Commission took part in two consecutive OEWSGA sessions in NY and participated in panels and made several interventions. Has an observer status at the GANHRI working group on aging and the human rights of older persons - made several contributions for the promotion of the rights of OPs. Moreover, has also been advocating for a dedicated international convention on the rights of older persons as well.

It has collaborated with special procedures, including with the independent expert on the enjoyment of all human rights of Older Persons. The input that the Commission has shared on areas of violence, abuse, and neglect of older persons in Ethiopia is incorporated in the final report submitted to the Human Rights Council by the Independent Expert. This engagement has allowed Ethiopia to benefit from the expertise and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur, demonstrating its commitment to addressing the rights of older persons at the international level.

At the regional level, Ethiopia has engaged with mechanisms such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). The country has submitted reports to the ACHPR, outlining its efforts to protect and promote human rights, including those of older persons. Notably, in the seventh to tenth periodic country reports (2015-2022) on the implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Ministry of Justice allocated a separate section that addressed the rights of older persons.

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission also provided input on the report, including the section on older persons' rights. The Commissioner for the rights of persons with disabilities and rights of older persons is expert member of the working group on the rights of older persons and persons with disabilities in Africa. This working group is actively promoting the widespread ratification of the African protocol on the rights of older persons, with the aim of ensuring that it enters into force.

The country has consistently participated in all cycles of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. However, there have been no specific sections dedicated to the rights of older persons in the First, Second, and Third Cycles of the UPR.

In the 8th periodic report submitted under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Ethiopia briefly mentioned the rights of older persons. The report highlighted that elderly women were provided with care and support services within the community through programs like the urban safety-net program, which benefitted over 14,000 elderly women.

Ethiopia has also engaged with treaty bodies, such as the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), both of which have addressed issues related to older persons. The country has submitted reports to these treaty bodies. Ethiopia has actively participated in dialogues with these treaty bodies, providing additional information and addressing questions and concerns raised by the committees.

2. Have those engagements resulted in positive impact in strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons? Please elaborate. (500 words)

The Commissions' engagement in the international and regional human rights mechanisms, such as the universal periodic review (UPR), treaty bodies, special procedures, and regional mechanisms, has had a positive impact in strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons in Ethiopia. Despite the limitations in engagement, these mechanisms have been beneficial in bringing attention to the overall situation of older persons in the country.

The engagement with international and regional human rights mechanisms has still been effective in creating awareness and changing attitudes towards the rights of older persons in Ethiopia. The reporting system in treaty-based or special mechanisms has brought attention to the responsible bodies, highlighting the issues and challenges faced by older persons. For example, when The Open-ended Working Group on Ageing requests a report on the issue of older persons, it draws attention to the responsible body and inspires them to assess their current efforts and take actions. Additionally, the requirement for research in response to these requests has helped various stakeholders recognize the importance of documentation and the lack of data on older persons.

One significant achievement resulting from international and regional engagement is Ethiopia's ratification of the African Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons. This accomplishment was made possible through consistent advocacy efforts, in which international and regional engagements played a crucial role. Furthermore, the potential adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons will be another significant achievement facilitated by international engagements.

In conclusion, despite the limitations, international and regional engagements have played a vital role in the protection and promotion of human rights for older persons in Ethiopia. As these engagements continue to increase, the promotion and protection of older persons in the country

will improve. With the potential entry into force of the African Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons and the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons, there is great potential for further positive influence on the rights of older persons in Ethiopia.

**3. What other options can be considered to strengthen the protection of older persons?
Please elaborate.**

To further strengthen the protection of older persons in Ethiopia, it is crucial to consider additional options beyond those already mentioned.

The very first intervention that could possibly be considered to strengthen the protection of older persons is the adoption of a comprehensive older person's convention at international level. As it can be understood from the answers given under the first part of this questionnaire, almost all gaps identified are linked to the lack of normative frameworks both at international and national level. Hence expediting the process of adoption of the Convention on the rights of older persons also strengthens the protection of their rights and prompts the development of national laws specifically focusing on the rights of older persons as well.

The other major area of intervention could be creating awareness about the rights and needs of older persons to ensure they are not neglected or discriminated against. In this regard, efforts should be made to eliminate the charity-based attitudinal barriers witnessed among various stakeholders including governmental bodies and the public in general. This can be done through awareness creation platforms like trainings, advocacy campaigns and lobbying to overcome the attitudinal barriers prevalent around duty bearers and service providers and ensure older persons are treated with dignity and respect.

Community based initiatives and public awareness campaigns should also be expanded to promote the rights and well-being of older persons. This can include establishing community centers or support groups for older persons, organizing awareness campaigns on issues such as elder abuse and ageism, and implementing intergenerational programs that bring together older persons and youth to foster mutual understanding and support.

Moreover, there is a need for improved data collection and research about older persons in Ethiopia. This can help to better understand their needs and challenges, as well as inform the development of targeted policies and programs. International and regional human rights mechanisms can play a role in advocating for improved data collection and research on older persons, ensuring that their specific needs are addressed in policy development.

Efforts should also be made to strengthen access to justice for older persons, ensuring they have access to legal remedies in cases of discrimination, abuse, or violations of their rights. This can involve providing legal aid services specifically tailored to the needs of older persons, as well as training legal professionals on issues related to aging and human rights.

4. If applicable, what is your assessment on the protection of the human rights of older persons according to regional and international instruments? (500 words)

In assessing the protection of the human rights of older persons according to regional and international instruments, it is evident that while there are existing instruments that address this issue, they fall short in directly tackling the major challenges faced by older persons. This indicates that additional measures, such as an international convention specifically focused on the rights of older persons, are necessary.

Older persons continue to experience deep-rooted human rights violations, primarily stemming from ageism and age-based discrimination. These violations encompass various forms of mistreatment, including violence, abuse, and neglect. The current regional and international instruments, although indirectly addressing the rights of older persons, do not provide sufficient measures to combat these issues effectively.

To overcome these challenges, it is crucial to establish tailor-made solutions through international instruments. By implementing targeted measures, the specific needs and rights of older persons can be adequately addressed and protected. This approach will enable a more comprehensive and effective framework for safeguarding the human rights of older persons on a global scale.

One positive development in this regard is the protocol on the rights of older persons introduced by the African Union. This protocol signifies a step forward in recognizing and addressing the rights of older persons within the African region. However, it is important to note that the protocol is still pending enforcement due to the limited number of ratifications it has received.

In conclusion, while there are regional and international instruments that touch upon the rights of older persons, their current scope is insufficient in directly tackling the significant challenges faced by this demographic. To adequately protect the human rights of older persons, it is imperative to establish an international convention tailored specifically to their needs. Additionally, the positive steps taken by the African Union through the protocol on the rights of older persons demonstrate progress, but further efforts are necessary to ensure its widespread implementation. By enhancing the existing instruments and promoting widespread ratification, we can work towards a more comprehensive and effective framework for protecting the human rights of older persons globally.