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**AFRICA'S COMMON POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF OLDER
PERSONS IN AFRICA**

DRAFT AFRICA'S COMMON POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS IN AFRICA

We, African Ministers of Social Development during our 3rd Session of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Social Development, will meet in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia under the theme ***“Promoting The Rights And Welfare Of Persons With Disabilities”*** from 26 – 30 November 2012.

Recalling

- The AU Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002;
- AU Social Policy Framework
- African Charter of Human and People's Rights
- The AU draft Protocol to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa ;
- The AU Executive Council Decision EX.CL Dec..... on the Establishment of an Advisory Council on Ageing;
- UN Plan of Action on Ageing – 1982
- UN Principles for Older Persons -1991
- UN Proclamation on Ageing - 1992

Taking note of the consultations on ageing that have taken place by the steering committee on ageing from 2009 – 2010 drawing up the modalities for an Advisory Council on Ageing and the finalisation of the draft protocol on ageing- 2012;

Welcoming the important opportunity provided by the on-going global dialogue on the issues of ageing as well as the dialogue on the post 2015 (post MDG agenda) and the Rio+20 agenda.

Recognizing that ageing is a pertinent and cross-cutting development issue in Africa and that the demographic of older persons is expanding, in addition to changing family structures and reduced family support;

Further noting that while ageing is a key issue, older persons are still not given priority at the national level in terms of, highly regarded institutions, solid policies and resources to implement these policies;

Acknowledging that the number of older persons is rising in Africa- in 2012 the percentage of older persons aged 60 and above is at 5.3% and by 2050 it is expected to increase to 10.5%;

Acknowledging also that Older Persons and people with disabilities have the right to special measures of protection in keeping with their physical or moral needs”;

Concerned that ageing has not received adequate attention on national agendas and older persons remain confronted by poverty and social exclusion amongst others;

Emphasizing that ageing issues cannot be seen in isolation to other sectors and needs to be mainstreamed in related Ministries at national level within the political, socio-economic and cultural discourse;

Concerned that limited or lack of access to decent employment, a steady income and adequate health care among people of productive age, can potentially have a major impact on their quality of life in later years;

Noting with concern that evidence and research at national levels on the situation of older persons is inadequate and not of appropriate focus to motivate the necessary political will for required investment;

Recognizing that older persons make substantial contributions to society in communities through their knowledge, wisdom and responsibilities: as care givers in families, breadwinners and other key roles;

Appreciating that strategy at the national level appropriately focuses on “priority areas” for development, ageing has to be integrated into these other sectors;

We consequently recommend to:

I. African Union Member States

Leadership, Coordination and Implementation of issues on Ageing:

- a) To establish an all-inclusive and accountable institutional leadership that ensures coordination and integration of Ageing issues into national development instruments and to create space for national debate on priorities, strategic investments, social protection and legal measures;
- b) To include the needs of older persons in all national development strategies, policies and programmes taking into account the importance of gender sensitivities- the specific requirements of older women and men as well as rural; urban differences and other demographic characteristics;
- c) To put in place and fully promote sensitisation programmes at national level to motivate a change of mindset and societal attitudes towards ageing and older persons in order protect the human rights of older persons and develop a new rights-based culture of ageing; from welfare recipients to active, contributing members of society;
- d) To ensure security of older persons in terms of access to quality healthcare social services and income security, providing opportunities for older persons and putting in place and/or strengthening national social protection schemes for older persons;
- e) To ensure coverage for older people in HIV and AIDS prevention care and treatment programmes and support them in their role as caregivers;
- f) To allocate budget to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate evidence-based policies: thus addressing the data gap on ageing amongst others;
- g) To invest in the youth by promoting healthy habits, and ensuring education and employment opportunities, access to health services, and social security

- coverage for all workers as the best investment to improve the lives of future generations of older persons while reaping the demographic dividend;
- h) To ensure that issues of ageing form part of the national discourse on the post-2015 agenda;
 - i) To sign and ratify the Protocol to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa and ensure its effective implementation;
 - j) To advocate for, and support the elaboration of a UN Convention on the Human Rights of Older Persons, which would strengthen and reinforce the Protocol to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa and to continue promoting the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA)

II. To AU Commission and Regional Economic Communities

- a) To proactively advocate for the ratification and implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa and accelerated implementation of the AU Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing;
- b) To coordinate their programmes on ageing and identify synergies to work effectively with Member States and Development Partners on the enhancing the issue of ageing;
- c) Facilitate the functioning of the AU Advisory Council on Ageing;
- d) To request the AU Commission to undertake a revision of the AU Plan of Action and Framework on Ageing based on a systematic collation and synthesis of existing relevant evidence.

III. To International Development Partners

- a) To meet fair-share commitments to reach investment needs whereby international donors realize long-term, predictable financing commitments;
- b) To advocate for and support the elaboration of a UN Convention on the Human Rights of Older Persons and continue promoting the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA)
- c) To ensure that programmes and interventions for ageing on the continent take due cognizance of the cultural specificities of the national and sub-national environment;

We hereby mandate the Chair of the Bureau of the 3rd Session of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Social Development (CAMSD 3) and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission:

- To transmit this Africa's Common Position to the Co-Chairs at the United Nations Commission on Social Development in February 2013;
- To share this Common Position with relevant Conferences of African Union Ministers;
- To ensure consensus between CAMSD3 and the African Group in New York on the Africa's Common Position;