

**Independent National Commission on Human Rights of Liberia (INCHR)**

**Contribution to the**

**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK OF THE ISSUES EXAMINED AT THE IX SESSION OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON AGEING:**

**Autonomy and Independence**

**February 1, 2019**

1. For now, there are no legal provisions in Liberia recognizing the right to long term and reassuring care for older adults (elderly). However, under the social welfare department of the then Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, a division for catering to the welfare of the elderly was established. Presently this Social Welfare component has been transferred to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection.

However, it is not clear whether clear-cut policies aimed at considering the autonomy, health, and well-being and the social connectedness of the elderly have been developed. Envisioning the future of senior citizens where their physical health, social connections, and interactions are given due consideration is presently non-existent.

1. Efforts aimed at establishing “Old Folks” homes to cater to the elderly have been undertaken by many private institutions and individuals. Many of these efforts ended up as a failure due to many reasons. Firstly, most of these efforts are tailored to conform to Western practice, and additionally, plans and policies for running these institutions are hap-hazard. Any plans or policies recognizing the long term and supportive care for the elderly must be considered within the African context. While the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection monitors institutions that are established to provide care for older folks, Information from the Ministry indicates that laws, policies, and standards for the establishment and operation of such homes need to be rejuvenated. It is anticipated that the Government will sign and ratify to the African Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa. The normative content of the Protocol will enrich whatever policy decision that the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection will undertake.
2. Long-term and palliative care could be defined within the African context, where the Elderly as part and parcel of an extended family could be provided all necessary facilities including requisite health care, technology and live within the social luxury of his/her extended family where care is provided accordingly.
3. Neither government no private individual or institution has drawn up definite program and policies to guarantee older persons the enjoyment of their right to long term and palliative care. Meanwhile, there may be some unofficial policy providing long-term and palliative care for older persons.
4. One of the best practices in adopting and implementing a normative framework for the realization of these rights for the older folks is the promulgation of requisite laws and policies. For Africa creating old folks homes is like ostracizing or rejecting the senior generation. Providing home care with the family could be most welcomed.
5. Older persons along with visually impaired and physically challenged are all along street corners begging for daily bread. While there are some attempts by the government to address the plight of the disabled community, there is no visible effort to address the needs and guarantee the elderly the enjoyment of their right to long-term and palliative care. In essence, older persons have never been factored in any meaningful programs, even in post-war Liberia.
6. There is no such design yet in Liberia. There is no normative and political framework related to long-term and palliative, careless to think of including the participation of older persons.
7. Generally, there are laws that guarantee everyone rights to the enjoyment of life, but there are no specific laws on older persons.