



NATIONAL SENIOR CITIZENS CENTRE

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL



NIGERIA'S RESPONSE REGARDING THE EXISTING INTERNATIONAL FRAME WORK OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS, POSSIBLE GAPS AND OPTIONS ON HOW BEST TO ADDRESS THEM

In spite of the progressive efforts recorded by Nigeria, there is no gain saying that global gaps in the existence of internationally legally binding instruments on Rights of older persons, negatively affects country efforts.

Nigeria ultimately concludes that it is the compelling force of legislation in Nigeria – the National Senior Citizens Centre Act that enabled Nigeria to shift towards equity and inclusion of older persons in Development plan.

However, the absence of internationally binding legal instruments on the Rights of older persons is a yawning gap. It leaves Nigeria with no standard operating procedures for global adherence; no standard definitions and no terms of reference. The Protocol to the AU Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and the Rights of Older persons, should be further strengthened.

No member state has an access to global peer-review mechanisms or UN Commission to influence accountability or enforcement of roles of duty bearers.

The Nigerian Government has engaged her policies, international and regional human rights mechanisms as follows:

a. EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION:

The establishment of National Senior Citizens Centre has instituted operational efficiency to the statutory management of Older persons in Nigeria and is an agency that has assumed the responsibility to promote and ensure the enjoyment of all Human Rights of all older persons (60yrs and above) in Nigeria.

PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

Ageing Mainstreaming:

The Government of Nigeria through the National Senior Citizens Centre has formed solid partnerships with Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) for the establishment of ageing desks. Consequently, ageing desk officers were appointed in 32 MDAs, the National Assembly and Women Affairs and Social Development.

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NSCC...Improving quality of life of Senior Citizens...

In collaboration with UNFPA, National Senior Citizens Centre organized capacity building training programs for the 62 appointed desks officers. Their knowledge of ageing policy was developed along with enhancing the planning and implementation aspects of their MDAs' statutory mandates. The desk officers were educated on the fundamental principles of ageing and made aware of the statutory obligation mainstreaming of older persons in programs. The capacity building included ensuring key understanding of the importance of upholding human rights of older persons.

Additionally, the Government of Nigeria through the National Senior Citizens Centre has carried out heightened capacity building of 34 State Directors of Social Welfare/Social Development from 34 States and Federal Capital Territory on the National Senior Citizens Centre Act 2017, the National policy on Ageing for Older Persons 2021, and each States' legislation and policies in facilitating ageing mainstreaming and ensuring the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons in the sub-national and Local Government Areas.

b. VIOLENCE, NEGLECT AND ABUSE

The Government of Nigeria through the National Senior Citizens Centre has:

- i. **Launched Campaigns Against Discrimination with National Senior Citizens Centre Campaign messages (mini documentaries presently running during all Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Network programs and during commercial breaks, also running on Federal Radio Cooperation of Nigeria (FRCN), Africa Independent Television (AIT) and News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).**
- ii. **Developed and distributed 10 effective electronic and 3000 hard copies of information, education and communication (IEC) materials in partnership with National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), National Orientation Agency (NOA) and Legal Aid Council of Nigeria, translated into 3 major Nigerian languages on Elder Abuse AWARENESS and remedy and rescue Call lines.**
- iii. **Created the Anti-Elder Abuse Community Based Response Mechanism, an initiative of the National Senior Citizens Centre to stem increasing reported and unreported incidents of elder abuse within families and communities.**

c. LONG TERM CARE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

The Government of Nigeria through the National Senior Citizens Centre has:

- i. **Secured partnership with National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) World Health Organization Nigeria, and Executive Secretaries of States Primary Health Care Development Agencies for the Mainstreaming of Integrated Care of older persons into Primary Health Care Services.**

- ii. Conducted a National Stakeholder Consultative Workshop on Integrated Care for older persons (ICOPE) for Development of Concept and Plan of Activities and Timelines.
- iii. Executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Implementation of Integrated Care for Older Persons (ICOPE) with National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), World Health Organization Nigeria, Forum of Executive Secretaries of States Primary Health Care Development Agencies.
- iv. Conducted desk reviews by Expert Groups of existing national and state policy frameworks, strategic action plans, literature on Care of older persons with focus on Primary Health and harmonized with Diagnostic Report of situation older persons and care. National Senior Citizens Centre - National Directorate of Employment (NDE) Enumerators in Ushafa Community, Bwari Area Council, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja during Pilot Testing of Survey instrument on Indigenous Craft and Skills Assessment for enumerators in selected LGAs in Nigeria National Senior Citizens Centre- National Primary Health Care Development Agency - World Health Organization National Workshop on Mainstreaming Geriatric Care into Primary Health Care System in Nigeria.
- v. In partnership with World Health Organization Nigeria and National Primary Health Care Development Agency developed scope, objectives and assessment tools for human resource, infrastructure, data and community outreach and referral systems for Baseline development.
- vi. National Senior Citizens Centre Mounted Nationwide media campaigns for Senior Citizens Support Networks to fundamentally change negative perception on Ageing and older persons and to promote age friendly environment and services.
- vii. Developed Proof of Concept Protocol and guide lines and has commenced Pilots of Integrated care for older persons in Adamawa, Rivers State and the Federal Capital Territory
- viii. Medical outreach to older persons on Health Promotions, health checks, and referrals in Area Councils in Abuja and Town Hall meeting venues.
To ensure Older persons' right to Long term care, Nigeria is building sustainable Health and Social Care Quality Assurance System for Older persons in Nigeria. Care giving to older persons have been identified as a Skill and Geriatric Social Care has been integrated into the Nigerian Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) with international standard.

National Board for Technical Education approved National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Geriatric Social Care Skills Training and Certification. Systems, structures and Mechanisms for licensing, accrediting, operating and monitoring Geriatric Social Care Services and Protection of Rights of Older Service user in all settings are being established.

Nigeria is developing a National Data System and Directory of Care Services Providers, Accredited Agencies and Facilities with navigation of Care Services and Referral.

d. AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

National Senior Citizens Centre Strategic Roadmap stems from the demands of the National Senior Citizens Centre Act 2017; the National Policy on Ageing for Older Persons 2021; the National Social Protection Policy; the Sustainable Development Goals' Agenda 2030 and World Health Organization Healthy Ageing Framework 2020-2030. It also aligns with the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Disaster Management and Social Development Strategic Roadmap (2021-2025) and the National Development Plan 2021-2025. The objective of the National Senior Citizens Centre Strategic Roadmap is to galvanize national, subnational and international stakeholders to collaboratively see resilient pathways to improving quality of life and wellbeing of senior citizens. It gives a clear and realistic direction which transcends political cycles and jurisdiction on how to accelerate inclusion of older persons in development. It presents a framework for coordinated national action, towards reversing many years of exclusion of older persons, by clarifying the mandate, vision, mission, priority areas and strategic pathways. It lays out the organizational strategy as guide and context for its integral part; the Action Plan on Ageing and project activities.

National Senior Citizens Centre's Seven (7) Strategic Priority Areas:

1. Income Security
2. Health & Wellbeing
3. Engagement of capacities of senior citizens
4. Promote age-friendly environment
5. Accelerate high level advocacy and public sensitization for positive change in perception of ageing and older persons
6. Facilitate the production of comprehensive and disaggregated data
7. Strengthen partnerships & coordination

National Senior Citizens Centre's Two (2) Strategic Pathways:

Ageing Mainstreaming
Creating new opportunities

e. ACCESS TO JUSTICE:

The National Policy on Ageing for Older Persons 2021: This instrument aims to improve the overall wellbeing of older persons in Nigeria. The objective is to have a society where senior citizens are guaranteed security, independence, participation, comprehensive care, and dignity. It covers intersecting spectrum

of issues and opportunities for older women and men in urban and rural settings, older persons living with disabilities, older migrants, internally displaced older persons, poor older persons and older persons that are full of vigour, contributing to the progress of families, communities and larger society. This policy is positioned to uphold the Rights and dignity of older persons by providing an age-friendly environment to maximize their potential for self-fulfilment. The National policy is intentional and is located to significantly reduce ageism and abuse, promote optimistic views. It provides the concrete procedures and ecosystems for ensuring equal opportunities for older persons in order that they can achieve their potential in life regardless of background, including through full and active participation in civic, social, economic and political aspects of decision-making processes. The Action plan provides the brick-by-brick programmatic actions, indicators, timelines and actors to deliver on activities. It works through the strategic framework, compelling acceleration of social inclusion of senior citizens in development, in line with the National Development Plan 2021-2025 and the Strategic Roadmap launched by the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development. The National Action Plan on Ageing, acknowledges the diversity of the older population with social inclusion of all older persons as its cardinal point. It embraces an optimistic perception of ageing, addressing both the challenges and opportunities. With a lens on older persons as a force for economic development, the Action Plan adopts the National Strategy which fosters approaches that promote socially and economically active, secured and healthy ageing population.

In addition to the National Policy on Ageing, Nigeria has other policy aimed at upholding the dignity of its vulnerable population in general and older persons in particular. These include,

National Social Protection policy.

National Policy framework on Healthcare for the Aged (2018)

National Strategic Health Development Plan, 2018-2022.

National Policy framework on Healthcare for the Aged (2018)

National Strategic Health Development Plan, 2018-2022.

f. CONTRIBUTION OF OLDER PERSONS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

ENGAGEMENT MECHANISMS National Senior Citizens Centre's Stakeholders Consultative Forum on Ageing and its Governance Structure: NSCC developed and immediately launched a formidable Stakeholder Consultative Forum on Ageing together with its Governance Structure in 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory; which reflects a sectoral composition of the multi-dimensional issues of ageing. The Governance structure is made up of:

Two Co-Chairs

Six Vice- Chairs in thematic areas of Health and Social Care, Livelihoods, Pensions and Social Assistance, Agriculture and Food Security, Continuing Engagements and Learning Opportunities, Age Friendly Environment and Services, Transport, Housing, Water and Sanitation, Research and Data.

This forum is managed by older persons themselves and provides a sense of ownership and inclusion. The objectives of this governance structure are to serve as a robust partnership vehicle that ensures that no one is left behind regardless of geographical area. Furthermore, they mount relentless advocacy campaigns on their State Government to ensure enjoyment of all human rights of older persons.

g. ECONOMIC SECURITY:

The Government of Nigeria through the National Senior Citizens Centre has developed the following:

- **The Senior-led Indigenous Crafts and Skills program known as the ‘Spark Age Intergenerational Empowerment Program’ in partnership with the National Directorate of Employment (NDE):**
- **Survey tools and trained 24 Master Trainers of: State-wide Enumerators for the assessments of older persons' indigenous craft and skills.**
- **Livelihood ventures were set up towards the development of micro-credit enterprises in 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory.**
- **Pilot surveys on indigenous crafts and skills assessments were conducted in 3 Area Councils of the Federal Capital Territory; preparatory to nationwide assessments in 18 states and 9 Local Government Areas per State.**
- **National Senior Citizens Centre’s partnership with the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) includes mainstreaming older persons into the NDE ‘Matured People's Program’ and integrating 36 older persons' in 18 States and the Federal Capital Territory, for the Five Hundred Thousand Naira loan (N500,000.00). So far, Eighteen Million Naira (N18,000,000.00) loan has been disbursed through the NDE mechanism.**
- **Secured a ‘Proof of Concept Grant’ for three older persons per State, in 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory, in indigenous crafts making ventures. Stakeholders in Ageing Consultative Forum across Local Government Areas are excited about the uncommon prospects and have been mapping outstanding indigenous crafts in their respective States for these grants.**
- **Identified and listed 2,390 very poor and vulnerable older persons in 33 States and the Federal Capital Territory for mainstreaming into the Grants for Poor and Vulnerable coordinated by National Social Investment Programs.**

h. RIGHT TO HEALTH AND ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES:

Some of the challenges faced by older persons in their enjoyment of the right to health including the impact of intersectional discrimination and inequality based on age, gender, disability and other grounds are:

- **Poverty, due to loss or reduction of earning power.**
- **Absence or minimal Social and financial risk protection for poor and vulnerable population. In its attempt to address this issue, the Nigerian Government established the National Health Insurance Scheme to:**
 - i. **ensure access to quality health care services,**
 - ii. **provide financial risk protection,**
 - iii. **reduce rising costs of health care services and**
 - iv. **ensure efficiency in health care through programmes such as the:**
 - **Formal Sector Social Health Insurance Programme (FSSHIP),**
 - **Mobile Health,**
 - **Voluntary Contributors Social Health Insurance Programme (VCSHIP),**
 - **Tertiary Institution Social Health Insurance Programme (TISHIP),**
 - **Community Based Social Health Insurance Programme (CBSHIP),**
 - **Public Primary Pupils Social Health Insurance Programme (PPPSHIP)**
 - **Provision of health care services for children under 5 years, prison inmates, disabled persons, retirees and the elderly.**

I. SOCIAL INCLUSION & AGE FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

The Government of Nigeria through the National Senior Citizens Centre, partnered with National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), National Social Safety-Nets Coordinating Office (NASSCO) and National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) to disaggregate data on older persons- and progressively collecting and harmonizing data, on older persons for building a comprehensive system.

National Senior Citizens Centre developed core multi-sector indicators of Age-friendly service and National Senior Citizens Centre Age Watch Index by sectors to be advertised and deployed in ranking sector operators like banks, hospitals, transportation and aviation services for their compliance to ensure dignified services, discounts and concession protocols.

A technical working group is working within work streams of; registration and enrolment, card issuance, functional identity, verification system, use cases, Formal launch of the National Policy on Ageing by the Honorable Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation , Disaster Management and Social Development at the First Presidential Summit on Ageing NSCC-NIMC-NUP Town Hall Meeting on Awareness Creation towards the provision of functional Identity Cards to Senior Citizens in Nigeria, National Senior Citizens Centre information, education and communication (IEC) Materials for the National Network Support Against Ageism, awareness and advocacy. The target is to register senior citizens and provide them with functional Identity cards to enable them access age-friendly services such as banking, transportation, aviation, medical, dignified treatments and access facilities in open and public spaces.

LEGAL & POLICY FRAMEWORKS

The National Senior Citizens Centre Act 2017: An overarching Act enacted by the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, that establishes the National Senior Citizens Centre to cater for the needs of senior citizens; and for related matters. The Act is in line with Sec. 16 (2) (d) of the 1999 Constitution declaring it a State Policy to provide adequate social services and an improved quality of life for the elderly. National Senior Citizens Centre is statutorily responsible for the provision of recreational, sports, educational, health and social programs and ensure facilities designed for the full enjoyment and benefit of senior citizens.

RATIFICATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION PROTOCOL ON THE RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS

The Protocol was adopted in January 30, 2016 and Nigeria signed on the 10th February, 2020. On the 23rd of October 2023 the Federal Executive Council approved Nigeria's Ratification of the Protocol. The process for the instrument of the ratification to be signed by the President, is ongoing. The protocol, comprises of standards contained in International, Regional and National Conventions, Treaties Policies and Sustainable Development Goals. All with the primary focus of enhancing the human rights and dignity of older persons. Most significantly, the Protocol, articulates, African traditional virtues, values and practices, which inspires and characterize the provisions of mutual social and communal care and support, respect for older members of society and passing of knowledge to younger population groups.

OLDER PERSONS (RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES) BILL 2021

It is aimed at conferring privileges and benefits on older persons, expected to enhance their quality of life. It would offer the most comprehensive legal framework ever available for older persons in the country, addressing among others, the social and economic challenges triggered by ageing. It was sent for the President's assent in April, 2022 and that is the last that has been heard of it.

VISIT OF THE UN INDEPENDENT EXPERT ON ENJOYMENT OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS BY OLDER PERSONS.

The United Nations Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Older Persons paid an official visit to Nigeria on the government's invitation from 29 of August to 9 September, 2022.

During her visit, she interacted with MDAs, government officials, professionals in ageing, older persons, academia, representatives of care homes, homes for older persons, IDP camps, CSOs, organised private sector and organisations in FCT, Lagos State, Oyo State and Benue State.

The UN- IE recognised the link between poor economic situation and old age poverty and encouraged the government to do more to reduce its impact on older persons.

The UN-IE also, acknowledged the different activities and innovative projects that had been undertaken by NSCC since its establishment. These include, partnering with leading

MDAs to address issues on primary health care, legal aid assistance, violence and abuse, creation of desk officers as focal persons on ageing to ensure mainstreaming of older persons in all branches of government.

Another commendable effort of National Senior Citizens Centre recognised by the UN-IE was the creation of the National Stakeholders Consultative Forum, which is aimed at coordinating activities at state level and exchange progressive ideas on ageing and the rights of older persons. The UN-IE was extremely pleased that National Senior Citizens Centre stakeholders involved traditional institutions and essential actors to raise awareness about ageing issues. She was also able to interact with them in all the states she visited.

The UN-IE was also, pleased to learn about the older persons Rights & Privileges Bill, which will offer the most comprehensive legal framework for other persons in Nigeria. She however urged Centre and stakeholders to work towards ensuring that the President assents to the bill.

In conclusion, National Senior Citizens Centre would like responsible agencies to mainstream older persons in their comments in the following areas;

Adopt measures to combat all forms of discrimination, especially older women. Older women have been subjected to harmful traditional practices and stereotypes.

Continue to enact legislation to protect persons from violent crimes, especially children, women and the elderly. Elder abuse remains unchecked because it occurs mostly within the confines of older person's domestic space. Training of law enforcement officers on elder abuse and enacting more implementable legislation, will go a long way in curbing this menace.

Reinforce victim protection services, taking into account the vulnerability of older women.

Intensify efforts to enable older women to gain access to justice by increasing gender awareness among judges and other court personnel.

Continue to work in the effective implementation of the second national plan for the development of health system (2018- 2022), especially to ensure coverage of older persons in rural and remote areas.

Ensure the protection of older women and children from all forms of abuse and exploitation in internally displaced person' camps. Understanding that older persons and other vulnerable groups should be given priority in humanitarian situations. National Senior Citizens Centre in collaboration with its stakeholders, set up older persons help desk in all camps in Delta State, during the flood incident. Older persons' dignity was restored, as they didn't have to scramble for food, medicals and non- food items but were attended to separately, through the help desks.

Nigeria unequivocally promotes, calls for and supports an accelerated UN OEWGA process of securing a new UN Convention on the Rights of Older persons. Moving forward in the 14th session, the Normative content of international

instrument and the negotiation of such content should be focal during Plenary sessions and Expert group panels discussing.

Rights of Older persons are breached by the absence of a UN Convention on Rights of Older persons as it is for other population categories.

Thank you.