

Message sent on behalf of Antonio Tavares, Legal Counsel

With reference to your email of 4 May 2017 requesting inputs on the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on ageing's upcoming session focusing on areas "equality and non-discrimination" and "neglect, violence and abuse" in the context of older persons, this is to provide the Organization's inputs.

One of the priorities of work identified for FAO in social protection is related to extending the coverage of social protection (social assistance and social insurance) to rural areas. A large portion of the rural population (around 70% has no access to adequate social protection). This includes old age people living in rural areas and in particular in the agricultural context.

Due to the particularity of employment in the agricultural sector, social insurance schemes are often not accessible to agricultural workers and smallholder farmers. This means that people in old age are often excluded from contributory insurance schemes, including pension schemes, by design.

When looking at social assistance (so non-contributory schemes), poor and vulnerable old age people in rural areas also face particular barriers in accessing benefits.

At global level, FAO is conducting a study to analyze the barriers faced by rural population to access social protection programs. And at country level specific analysis and recommendations to ensure that vulnerable populations in rural areas are covered by appropriate policies and programs that protect them from the specific risks that they face during the whole lifecycle.

We have not yet engaged in any study or country work specifically on ageing - and it is true that this has many implications for social protection - in particular in rural areas where in some regions where are observing migration from working age population. However, the work that we do does address some of the specific needs and issues from that age group in a more holistic approach across the lifecycle.