

**Guiding Questions for Defining the Normative Content of the Issues Examined at the
Tenth Working Session of the Open-ended Working Group:**

Social Protection and Social Security (including social protection floors)

Definition

1. What is the definition of the right to social security and social protection (including social protection floors) for older persons in the national legislation in your country? Or how should such a right be defined, considering existing national, regional and international legal framework?

The Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity has been set up to provide fair, equitable and responsive social protection in a sustainable manner to citizens of the Republic with special attention to senior citizens, persons with disabilities as well as vulnerable persons and reinforce national solidarity.

The National Pensions Act

Scope of the right

2. What are the key normative elements of the right to social protection and social security for older persons? Please provide references to existing standards on such elements as below, as well as any additional elements:

a) Availability of contributory and non-contributory schemes for older persons

Non-contributory Benefits

Every Mauritian citizen benefits from the National Pension Scheme (NPS) as from the age of 60, at the monthly rate of Rs. 9,000. A person aged 90 and below 100 years receive a pension of Rs 16,210, while centenarian receives Rs 21,710.

Retirement Gratuity

Older persons who have been in continuous employment for at least 12 months benefit from a retirement gratuity at retirement age (S49, Employment Rights Act). The retirement gratuity is paid in the form of a one-off lump sum, which is calculated on basis 15 days' remuneration for every 12 months' in continuous employment. In the event that an employee dies before reaching retirement age, his or her widow(er) or children or legal representative receive the lump sum.

Contributory Benefits

Employees of the private and parastatal bodies contribute to the National Pension Fund (NPF) also known as the Contributory Pension plan to which they benefit from at retirement age of 65.

b) Adequacy of benefits to guarantee older person's access to an adequate standard of living and adequate access to health care

Mauritius has a public healthcare system governed by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life which provide free healthcare for all, although there are many private health institutions as well, offering competent medical facilities and treatments. There are 5 five regional hospitals and two district hospitals (Souillac Hospital and Mahebourg Hospital) in Mauritius. There are also a few hospitals specializing in specific fields, such as the otorhinolaryngological hospital in Vacoas (ENT), the Brown Sequard psychiatric clinic in Beau-Bassin, the Subramaniam Bharati eye hospital in Moka, and the Poudre d'Or hospital with a focus on the treatment of pulmonary diseases.

c) Accessibility, including older person's coverage by social security systems, eligibility criteria, and affordability of contributions

Older persons receive the basic retirement pension when they become eligible that is

- (i) to every Mauritius citizen aged 60 or over.
- (ii) the person should have resided in Mauritius for an aggregate period of 12 years since attaining the age of 18.
- (iii) the residence qualification does not apply to a Mauritian citizen aged 70 or over.

(iv) Non-citizens must have resided in Mauritius for at least 15 years in aggregate since attaining the age of 40, three of those fifteen years being immediately before the claim is made.

d) Equitable access by older persons to the enjoyment of the right to social security and social protection, paying special attention to groups in vulnerable situation

1. Carer's Allowance- for Beneficiaries of Basic Invalidity Pension who need constant care and attention of another person

2. Financial Assistance under Social Aid Act

Payments under Social Aid Act are means tested.

Beneficiaries of Social Aid are also entitled to the following: free spectacles; Hearing Aids, wheelchairs, refund of travelling by bus to attend medical treatment; funeral grant. Additional Social Aid to Basic Pensions beneficiaries.

An additional social aid is paid to beneficiaries of Basic Pensions who live alone, pay rent and have no other income apart from the basic pension. The amount payable is Rs 1,849 per month.

e) Participation of older persons in the design and administration of the social security system

The Senior Citizens Council involves the participation of older persons in the design and administration of the social security system. Older persons are consulted and work on action plan to propose ideas for the betterment of their situation.

State obligations

3. What are the measures that should be undertaken by the State to respect, protect and fulfill the right of social security and social protection for older persons, regarding the normative elements as provided above?

Measures have already been taken.

Special considerations

4. What special measures and specific considerations should be considered in developing the normative content of the right of older persons to social protection and social security?

5. How should the responsibilities of non-State parties such as private sector be defined in the context of the right of older persons to social protection and social security?

The private sector must encourage private services for the silver economy that deal with issues like improving mobility, health, accommodation, leisure and physical activity by netting off against the imputed cost to social security and health systems for the elderly.

Implementation

6. What are the best practices and main challenges faced by your country in the adoption and implementation of the normative framework on social security and social protection for older persons?

Main challenges: since Mauritius will be putting a higher percentage of income into pension funds in the future, due to the increasing number of old people, it could reduce the resources available for more productive investments. This may lead to lower rates of economic growth. With greater number of old people, comes greater expenses in terms of security.