



COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

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Older persons have the right to work, including the right to the enjoyment of just and favorable conditions of work and the right to social security, among others. They should enjoy these rights on an equal basis with others.

In consultations and research conducted by the CHRP, older persons wish to continue working because being able to work gives them confidence to push for their autonomy and independence, as well as continue supporting their families who are still either directly or indirectly dependent on them. It is interesting to note that “women are more vulnerable to poverty in old age due to their lower labor force participation in the formal sector throughout their adult life, and consequently have less access to pensions.”¹ Although there are older persons who receive pensions—29% receive pensions from their former work through SSS, GSIS, and other schemes and 31% through the social pension program for indigent senior citizens, the amount ranging from 500 pesos (social pension) to 3,000 pesos (SSS) is insufficient to cover their basic monthly expenses.² This situation prompts many older persons to return to the workforce. On the other hand, there are also older persons who wish to work again to pursue long-held dreams, plans or other interests and remain active throughout their old age.

Age discrimination likewise limits older Filipinos’ access to employment. In hiring practices of employers, arbitrary age requirements bar older persons from getting employed. Similarly, some employers also impose early retirement due to a person’s old age. While these are already prohibited in the Anti-Age Discrimination Act of 2016, discrimination based on age continues to be widespread practice in the country.

As pointed out in numerous meetings, webinars and sessions including the OEWGA, there are normative, implementation, and monitoring gaps in the international human rights system on the rights of older persons. The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting government restrictions magnified these gaps and exacerbated the human rights situations and violations against older persons.

Enacting anti-age discrimination in labor laws is an important first step towards inclusive employment. Implementation of capacity-building programs and life-long learning opportunities at the national or community level that focuses on the reskilling or upskilling of

¹ UN ESCAP, Addressing the Challenges of Population Ageing in Asia and the Pacific: Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, Working paper, 13 September 2017, <https://www.unescap.org/publications/addressing-challenges-population-ageing-asia-and-pacific-implementation-madrid#> (Last accessed: 23 March 2021).

² SSS is the Social Security System, which is a state-run social insurance program in the Philippines for the private and informal sectors, while the Government Insurance Service System (GSIS) caters to the public sector. The social pension program for indigent senior citizens is an additional cash benefit from the government amounting to 500PHP every month to eligible older persons, as indicated in the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010 or RA 9994.



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older persons is another positive step for older persons to participate in the labor market. Post-Covid measures to stimulate the economy should include provisions that enable older persons to access employment and livelihood opportunities.

The State needs to conduct a widespread awareness-raising campaign among the public to challenge negative stereotypes against older persons, considering that particularly the impacts of the government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic magnified ageist views against older persons.

At the international level, the best way to address rights protection gaps is through the adoption of a convention within the UN human rights system that defines the specific rights of older persons and the corresponding obligations of duty-bearers, considering older persons' lived realities and specific contexts brought about by advanced age.