



საქართველოს სახალხო დამცველი
PUBLIC DEFENDER (OMBUDSMAN) OF GEORGIA

Eleventh Session of the UN OEWGA

Focus Area: Right to Work and Access to the Labour Market

Wednesday, 31 March 2021

Statement Delivered by Ms. Tamar Gvaramadze, First Deputy Public Defender of Georgia

Madam Vice-Chair,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen from different parts of the world,

It is my great pleasure to have an opportunity to address you today on this session and bring to your attention the Georgian context and the challenges faced by the elderly in our country when exercising their right to work and access to the labor market.

Notwithstanding the constitutional framework and the written regulations and standards to support the development and utilization of the employment potential of the elderly in Georgia, effective actions from the relevant state institutions have not been taken yet. In 2020, the overall unemployment rate in Georgia was at 20 percent, though the Government has not produced separate statistics on the unemployment of the elderly in the country. Whereas, in 2019 the unemployment rate among the population aged 65 and older, was at 7.6 percent.

Madam Vice-Chair, our Institution invited Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons to Georgia to assess the human rights situation of the elderly back in 2018. In the report, the Independent Expert stressed out that, a state program, focused on improving the qualifications of job seekers, thus increasing their likelihood of finding employment, neither provides any special assistance nor focuses on the needs of old-age job seekers.¹

To ensure access to the labor market, the state developed an online employment portal. According to official data, since 2014 - until now, activity on the portal of those seeking a job, aged 65 and over, was very low. This may be due to various reasons, such as no access to information, lack of access to digital technologies, etc.

In addition, the reason for the low employment rate of the elderly may be due to age discrimination which is frequent in the labor market. A survey conducted by our Institution identified gender and age-oriented language in applications posted on employment websites. Even people in their late forties are often stereotyped as lacking dynamism, efficiency, and skills. As there are no unemployment benefits, older workers who become unemployed are left without any income.

Madam Vice-Chair, similar to others COVID-19 has worsened dramatically the human rights situation of the elderly in Georgia. The current health crisis has affected negatively the ability of the elderly to stay socially connected, to work, and be actively involved in other activities. Moreover, it became a major challenge for the elderly to get familiar with distance working tools, especially in the education sector.

And, finally, Madam Vice-Chair, I would like to mention that the Georgian Government should acknowledge the existing and potential contributions made by older persons and promote the full enjoyment of human rights by older persons. In order to achieve these goals, it is necessary to start working on a binding international instrument that promotes, protects and ensures the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all older persons.

I thank you!

¹ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1638448?ln=en>, p. 7.