

## Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, eleventh session

### Normative content on the focus areas “Education, training and lifelong learning and capacity building” and “Social protection and social security (including social protection floors)”

#### Introduction of the working document submitted by DESA and OHCHR

[Amal Rafeh, DESA]

I am happy to join my colleague Rio from OHCHR to introduce the conference room paper for this panel, which will allow for a more in-depth discussion with experts on the adequacy of the normative framework of the international human rights framework and its implementation mechanisms for protecting the rights of older persons, as it relates to the 2 focus areas we had introduced at the 10th session of the working group.

The Conference Room paper is posted online and includes an analysis of the 94 inputs received.

I hope delegations have familiarized themselves with the content of the paper. My colleague Rio will walk us through the key takeaways from the paper.

[Rio Hada, OHCHR]

#### “Education, training and lifelong learning and capacity building”

In terms of **general overview**, the working document points out that constitutional guarantees varied in definition and scope with regard to older persons’ right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building. Many countries had general guarantees (without reference to age); some had specific guarantees for older persons (explicit and implicit); and others had combinations of both. No general or specific guarantees comprehensively covered all areas of education, training, life-long learning and capacity building for older persons.

With regard to **existing standards**, responses referred to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and UNESCO Conventions, as well as UNESCO’s Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education.

In terms of **scope of the right**, responses noted education is a multiplier right; it can unlock and increase enjoyment of other human rights. They noted the interrelated nature of key normative elements. Education is also a means to eliminate discrimination including ageism.

Submissions identified several **key normative elements** using the “4As” framework:

- **Availability:** a sufficient quantity of functional programmes, locations, facilities (buildings, infrastructure, equipment, amenities such as sanitation) and services for older persons.
- **Accessibility:** programmes, facilities and services should be accessible to older persons and includes elements of coverage, eligibility, affordability, participation and information and

physical access. Accessibility includes physical accessibility, economic accessibility (affordability) and information accessibility.

- **Acceptability:** programmes, facilities and services (in form and substance) should be of quality, culturally appropriate, sensitive to gender and life-course requirements.
- **Adaptability** means education should be flexible and meets the needs of older persons within diverse social and cultural settings, and a diversity of older learners.
- Other elements: Responses indicated that standards should recognize older persons' contributions – their creative, artistic and intellectual abilities, and as the transmitters of information, knowledge, traditions and cultural values.

Turning to **State obligations**, inputs noted Member States' obligations to take immediate steps to the maximum available resources towards progressive realization of the right, and to also ensure non-retrogression. Contributions in this area are collated in the working document under the typology of obligations to respect, protect and fulfill.

Among the **special considerations** noted in submissions are: need for equal opportunity to learn modern information technology to reduce digital divide; need to changing needs of labor markets with vocational training adapted to older persons; and addressing ageism in the provision of education.

#### **Focus area on social protection and social security (including social protection floors)**

As **general overview**, similar to the other focus area, submissions indicated that there is a high degree of inconsistency and limited coverage and general paucity of specific guarantees for older person's rights to social security, social protections, including social protection floors. Responses suggested a wide range of measures that should fall within the **definition**, including social insurance, contributory and non-contributory pensions and combination of different approaches.

In terms of **existing standards**, responses referred in particular to ILO's normative social security framework of conventions and recommendations as a starting point. These include: Convention No.102 that sets minimum standards for social security; Convention No.128 that specifically describes old age benefit for those 65 years or older; and Recommendation 202 that calls for the guarantee of basic income security to all persons in old age.

On key **normative elements**, the working document highlights:

- Ensuring **availability** by setting a criterion for pensionable age, qualifying period, scope of coverage and the form, duration, and level of benefits.
- Ensuring **adequacy** meaning guarantees for social protection and social security should prevent or at least alleviate poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion, and allow life in dignity.
- The key normative element of **access** include coverage and eligibility. Responses emphasize the importance of non-contributory schemes as all older persons should be covered by social security systems.
- Responses also highlighted the principles of equality & non-discrimination, including gender equality, and participation of older persons in the design of programmes.

In terms of **State obligations**, the document highlights:

- Measures to protect, in terms of ensuring third parties do not infringe upon the enjoyment of the right.
- Measures to fulfill the right, by taking positive steps towards its realization, including ensuring non-retrogression of the right – for example by ring-fencing social protection expenditures in times of crisis and austerity.

In terms of **specific considerations**, responses noted that programmes should be evidence based, rights based and reflect social justice values. Programmes should be flexible and consider personal and different circumstances of older persons including income, geographic location, gender, and the specific needs of groups in vulnerable situations.

On behalf of both DESA and OHCHR, we hope that this brief introduction will facilitate active discussion at this session.

Thank you.