

## **14th session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing**

### **Participation in public life and in decision-making process**

The following fundamental rights and freedoms are entrenched in Chapter Two of the Constitution of Mauritius. All citizens, including older people, enjoy these rights:

- the right to life;
- the right to personal liberty;
- the right to freedom from slavery and forced labour;
- the right to freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- the right to protection against deprivation of property;
- the right to privacy of the home and other property;
- the right to protection of the law [due process guarantees];
- the right to freedom of conscience;
- the right to freedom of expression;
- the right to freedom of assembly and association;
- the right to establish and maintain schools at one's own expense;
- the right to freedom of movement;
- the right to freedom from discrimination

The Constitution of Mauritius provides an unequivocal right for every citizen to be treated equally and to live a life free from discrimination. Section 16 of the Constitution, *inter alia*, provides that “no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect”.

The right to vote which is given to all citizens including older persons and is provided for in the Constitution, the Representation of People Act, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, the Local Government Act and this right is fully enforced in the Republic of Mauritius.

Older persons are guaranteed the exercise of their right to vote and to be elected on an equal basis with other citizens.

In order to address discrimination against older persons, the Welfare and Elderly Persons' Protection Unit, set up within the Ministry of Social Security National Solidarity Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions, is involved in raising public awareness on the rights of the elderly which enable them to lead dignified, secure lives, as equal members of society. In line with the Mauritian policy of "putting people first," the government has set up residential recreation centres for the elderly without discrimination of age and sex.

Mauritius recognises that education, as a basic human right, must be available without older persons facing discrimination. Older persons are therefore given the opportunity to pursue continuous learning and training through adult literacy and numeracy programs as well as training in acquiring basic skills in information and communication technology in order to allow them to fully participate in social and community life.