

Date: 19 March 2013

Robert Venne
Social Affairs Officer
Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD)
Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)
United Nations Secretariat,
Room S-2979, New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Robert Venne,

Ageing Nepal – a leading national NGO working on ageing issues in Nepal, would like to put forward following suggestions in response to the call for "**non-governmental organization input to the open ended working group on ageing**", made by UN-DESA, Division for Social Policy and Development. These suggestions are based on a series of discussions we recently had with other concerned NGOs and the government officers.

1. RIGHTS

1.1 UN should call for a Convention on the Rights of Older People (CROP) as soon as possible.

We unanimously and strongly believe that The Convention is the only way "for an international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons, based on the holistic approach in the work carried out in the fields of social development, human rights and non-discrimination, as well as gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as the contributions from the second global review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002", as stated in operating paragraph 1 of resolution 67/139 of 20 December 2012."

1.2 The eighteen Principles for Older Persons (Resolution No.46/91).

We suggest that all UN member countries should develop policies and programmes for effective implementation and monitoring of the UN Resolution No. 46/91, 1991.

2. DEFINITION

2.1 Defining "old age"

We unanimously and strongly believe that the definition of "Older Persons" should be made dynamic. The definition should be based on the "life expectancy at birth" of each country's population for that year.

The concept of "universal definition" of old age or older person is too rigid. It does not allow for necessary adjustments according to the country specific conditions, so is non-operative or irrelevant for many. We already see the irrelevance of 60yrs threshold for developed countries.



We suggest that the older person should be defined as "a person of age 10 years below the average life expectancy" of the country's population and it should be adjusted each year by a country at the time of presenting its national budget. This could be made mandatory through the international legal instrument developed through the **Convention on the Rights of Older People (CROP)**.

This approach to dynamic definition of "older person" will allow for each country to define its "older people" according to the general characteristics of its population; make necessary adjustments in national program and budget according to the number of "older persons" to be targeted each year, and adjust the total number of labour force that is shrinking with decreasing birth rate. The suggested dynamic definition is practical and operative as the definition of "Poverty Line" and the "retirement age" that vary with the country.

3. EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

3.1 Mainstreaming

Considering the fact that growth rate of ageing population is higher in developing countries and they are less prepared to address the issues of ageing population.

We suggest that CROP should come up with International Legal Instruments that make it mandatory for all UN bodies, international donor organizations and countries to fund **only** the development programmes and projects that have built-in component for Older Persons. For example, programs and projects in all aspects of national development such as Infrastructure development, health, education, social-welfare and so on - all should have a component in-built into the project document to qualify for international or bilateral funding support.

Any project and programme submitted by developing country for Grant Fund Support or Soft Loan from the international or bilateral funding agency or funding country must have a component for older persons built into such project or programme. Such mandatory provisions are already in place for addressing the issues of Environment and Gender, to name a few.

3.2 Older People in National Budget

A separate budget head "older persons" should be made a mandatory in the annual national budget lines of all UN member countries, failing to which they disqualify from receiving funding support from UN agencies such as ILO, WHO and so on.

4. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISORY MECHANISMS (Institutional Development)

Realizing the fact that birth rate in many countries is going below the population replenish rate, we suggest;

4.1 UNFPA need to focus away from "birth control" and "youth" to the ageing population under its umbrella programmes of "family planning".

4.2 The current programmes of national and international organizations involved in addressing gender issues such as UN-WOMEN are focused on women in active age group; practically ignoring those of old age. The current focus should be



shifted to older women or, at least, should incorporate the concerns of older women in their periodic plans.

4.3 UN to create a new body named **United Nations Fund for Older Persons** (UNFOP) similar to that of UNWOMEN or UNICEF.

4.4 It should be made mandatory for all recipient countries of international or bilateral funding support to have a separate government body at the national level Ministry or Department immediately below the ministry to oversee the concerns of ageing population in the country.

Sincerely

K. M. Gautam

Krishna M. Gautam
Founder Chairperson

