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**Open-ended Working Group on Ageing**

Tenth working session

15–18 April 2019

**Substantive Inputs on the Focus Area “Education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building”**

Working document submitted by  
 the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

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## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Background**

1. The Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, established by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/182 with the purpose of strengthening the protection for the human rights of older persons, will hold its tenth session at the United Nations Headquarters from 15 to 18 April 2019. The substantive discussions will focus on two focus areas: education, training, life-long learning and capacity building and social protection and social security (including social protection floors). To that end, the Bureau called for substantive inputs from member States, national human rights institutions, non-governmental organisations and United Nations system agencies and bodies, following questionnaires prepared by the Secretariat on the two focus areas.
2. During the tenth session, the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing will consider and discuss the contributions received, based on the working documents prepared by the Secretariat. The present document contains the analytical summary of contributions on the focus area: education, training, life-long learning and capacity building.

### **B. International human rights framework**

3. The right to education is grounded in international human rights law and other international treaties. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises that everyone has the right to education that shall be directed to the full development of the human person.<sup>1</sup> The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) devotes two articles to the right to education, articles 13 and 14. Article 13, the longest provision in the Covenant, is the most wide-ranging and comprehensive article on the right to education in international human rights law. The Committee on the ICESCR in its General Comment 13 affirms that the right to fundamental education extends to all those who have not yet satisfied their ‘basic learning needs’ and its enjoyment includes older persons. Fundamental education, therefore, is an integral component of adult education and lifelong learning.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, technical and vocational education ‘provides retraining for adults whose current knowledge and skills have become obsolete owing to technological, economic, employment, social or other changes’.<sup>3</sup>
4. Other international treaties also recognize the right to education, as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Convention against Discrimination in Education, which recognizes the right to continuous education without discrimination. The Convention defines the term ‘discrimination’ as ‘depriving any person or group of persons of access to education of any type or at any level’. In Article 4 (c) it obliges states parties ‘to encourage and intensify by appropriate methods the education of persons who have not received any primary education or who have not completed the entire primary education course and the continuation of their education on the basis of individual capacity’.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> UDHR, Article 26.

<sup>2</sup> General comment 13 - Right to education, ICESCR, para.22-24

<sup>3</sup> General comment 13 - Right to education, ICESCR, para.16.

<sup>4</sup> UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education, 14 December 1960

5. The UNESCO 2015 Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education specifies States' obligations and calls for the promotion of access and broader participation to lifelong learning. 'Lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages in all life-wide contexts through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) that together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands.' This implies 'tolerating no discrimination on any grounds, including age, gender, ethnicity, migrant status, language, religion, disability, illness, rurality, sexual identity or orientation, poverty, displacement, imprisonment, occupation or professional'. Furthermore, it implies 'devoting special attention and action to enhance access to quality learning for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups such as individuals with low levels of, or no, literacy and numeracy and schooling, vulnerable youth, migrant workers, members of ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, individuals with disability, prisoners, the elderly, people affected by conflict or disasters, refugees, stateless or displaced persons.' It also recommends Member States to develop, according to their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions, comprehensive, inclusive and integrated policies for adult learning and education in its various forms.<sup>5</sup>

6. Similarly, The UNESCO 2015 Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training, aims 'to empower individuals and promote employment, decent work and lifelong learning'. It recommends that Member States 'should take measures to ensure that all youth and adults have equal opportunities to learn, develop and enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies by transforming and expanding technical and vocational education and training in all its forms to address the great diversity of learning and training needs'.<sup>6</sup>

## II. Analysis of Submission Received

### A. Availability

#### HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS (Art 13. ICESCR and GC 13)

- The right to education, which is key to the full development of the human person and dignity, requires that educational institutions and programmes are available in sufficient quantity within the jurisdiction of the State.
- Individuals "who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education" have a right to fundamental education or basic education

#### UNESCO STANDARDS (recommendations on adult learning and education)

- State should apply governing structures and available resources to enhance the status of adult learning and education.
- Literacy, as the foundation for lifelong learning and a key condition for realizing the right to education, should be freely available.

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education, Para. 11, 2015

<sup>6</sup> UNESCO Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2015)

## 1. National Legal and Policy Framework

7. According to respondents, guarantees to the right to education for older persons are in place in many countries, whereas notable differences are observed among the legal and policy frameworks stipulating this right. Inputs noted the right to education recognised in their constitutions and national legislation as the legal basis that guarantees these rights for all citizens, albeit older persons are generally not specifically mentioned.

8. Legal and policy frameworks on education and life-long learning may explicitly refer to older persons, as is the case in Japan's Basic Act on Education and Basic Plan for Promoting Education, or in the Kyrgyz Republic Older Citizens Law, which imposes the obligation of the State to guarantee the right to education and create the necessary conditions for access to information, education and training. In Peru, for example, article 41 of law no. 30490 promotes basic education for older adults through pedagogical proposals relevant to the characteristics, learning needs and expectations of older persons.

9. Other national frameworks specify that the right to education applies regardless of age, which many countries understand as including, inter alia, older persons. For instance, in the Republic of Korea the Act on Education provides that all citizens have a right to life-long learning and to receive education based on their abilities and aptitudes. The Dominican Republic identifies laws related to the national development strategy establishing quality education for all, noting that the country seeks to implement and guarantee a national quality education system that enables continuous learning throughout the life.

10. For some respondents, the lack of identification of older persons as a specific cohort in legal and policy frameworks can hamper their actual enjoyment of the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building and result in their exclusion.

11. The rights of older persons in the area of education, training, life-long learning and capacity building seem to be more specific to the needs and challenges of older persons in legal and policy frameworks on older persons. For instance, the right of older persons to education is included in the Comprehensive Law for the Older Adult of Costa Rica and is materialised in the access of older persons to basic and diversified education programmes for adults, as well as in a range of specific courses offered by public universities and technical learning entities in the country. Malaysia, for example, reports that promoting life-long learning is one of the six strategies in the National Policy and Plan of Actions for older persons. In the Philippines, for example, the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010 provides educational privileges to pursue education to older persons through scholarships, financial aids, subsidies and other incentives.

12. Employment regulations were identified by respondents as relevant to the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building for older persons since they regulate capacity building and training in the labour context. Education and training can empower individuals as well as promote employment, decent work and life-long learning, as stipulated in UNESCO Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training. This is particularly relevant in a context where older persons are often expected to work for longer and the labour market is constantly changing. Inputs show that life-long learning activities in some European countries were explicitly designed to enhance employability and skills of older workers. The United Kingdom points to its industrial strategy, which is

committed to investing in people throughout their lifetimes through career-long learning. Another example is found in France, where mandatory regulations have been enacted to reduce barriers and to meet older workers' needs, including training.

13. Member States recognised the role of supranational regulations in their own legislative frameworks and national policies. State parties to the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons stressed its pertinence in guaranteeing the right to education of older persons in their respective countries, specifically article 20 on the right to education. The Convention prescribes that older persons have the right to education, on an equal basis with other sectors of the population and without discrimination, to participate in existing educational programmes at all levels; and to share their knowledge and experience with all generations.

14. Other international frameworks mentioned as relevant to the right to education of older persons in the national level were the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and various directives and frameworks from the European Union. For the latter, respondents identified the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Education and training 2020 framework, a resolution on long-life learning adopted in 2009 and a recommendation on the key competences related to life-long learning processes.

15. Several Non-Governmental Organisations pointed out that despite provisions on the right to education, there are unique disadvantages and aspects of the right to education in older age which are not adequately provided for in existing international human rights law. Furthermore, they indicate that the right to education has not been specifically applied to the life-course nor to life-long learning and education in older age within the international human rights framework. For instance, a respondent noted that the right to education as identified by international and European human rights law have seldomly operationalised with a life-course perspective and, on the European Union level, competence frameworks linked to education and training policies are focusing on skills relevant only to the labour market.

16. Responses suggest that life-long learning is receiving more attention, as several countries reported new legislations on this issue. For instance, in Mexico, the National Institute for the Education of Older Persons has been developing an educational model for older adults since 2015, while Denmark initiated a strategy for life-long learning in 2017. The Basic Education Act of Kenya in 2013 is reported to include adult and continuing education. Despite these positive developments, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe noted that while there has been an increase in the participation of older persons in trainings and education courses in some countries since 2012, the overall level of enrolment remains low for both men and women.

## **2. Challenges regarding quality education, training, life-long learning and capacity building services**

17. Older persons face multiple challenges with regard to the enjoyment of quality education, training, life-long learning and capacity building services. Ageing often intersects with other forms of vulnerability and social exclusion such as illness, disability and poverty. Older persons may face physical barriers to learning due to location, transportation and accessibility, and often lack the skills needed to fully benefit from digital and online life-long learning opportunities.

18. Despite various steps and initiatives undertaken by States in this regard, many older persons continue to experience the denial of this fundamental right due to numerous barriers. These include:

- The lack of information and awareness on available education and training services;
- The cost of education and training or the potential reduction in wages to accommodate time to participate in them;
- The lack of qualified teachers to address the needs and preferences of older persons; and
- The lack of transportation as well as the inaccessible educational facilities.

19. Ageist stereotypes also impact the right and access of older persons to education. Though not formalised, older persons are often discouraged from enrolling in classes and trainings because of a general mindset that education is for children and youth. Educational providers may neglect developing capacities among older persons, which in turn affects the demand and limits their educational opportunities, as several inputs reveal. Self-perception and individual images of ageing, anchored in misleading and negative stereotypes, play a role in hindering participation of older persons in educational and training activities.

20. Some respondents highlighted that older persons are often at a double disadvantage: on the one hand their level of education and training tends to be lower than that of the younger cohorts, and on the other their participation in learning activities is below the average of the total population. Such disadvantages take place despite an upward trend of the share of older persons in the labour force, which is projected to continue increasing globally at a faster rate.

21. Diverse and unclear competencies in legislation coupled with a large number of providers result in a great deal of confusion about existing services, which are poorly or infrequently coordinated amongst each other. Some respondents attributed low enrolment and retention rates in adult education and learning programmes to insufficient public funding or unsustainable donor funds. The International Labour Organization, in its submission, noted that public expenditure on education was around 14 per cent of total public expenditure globally in 2014<sup>7</sup>, however, levels of funding for adult learning and education are low. Forty-two per cent of countries spend less than 1 per cent of their public education expenditure on adult training<sup>8</sup>, and there is evidence of decreasing levels of formal training offered in enterprises.<sup>9</sup>

22. Lack of special skills, knowledge, understanding and negative attitudes on the part of persons engaged in providing education and training to older persons was also among concerns frequently raised by respondents. Inputs from both developed and developing countries reported instances where older persons themselves had no interest to avail the opportunity to utilise education and training activities, which could be attributed to low awareness of the value of these services.

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<sup>7</sup> International Commission on Financing Global Education (2016). *The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world*.

<sup>8</sup> UNESCO-UIL (2016). *3rd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education. The Impact of Adult Learning and Education on Health and Well-Being; Employment and the Labour Market; and Social, Civic and Community Life*.

<sup>9</sup> World Bank (2017), *Enterprise Surveys*.

23. Most submissions highlighted poverty-related barriers to accessing quality education, training, life-long learning and capacity building services, which include balancing work demands and providing care to other family members, as well as affordability of services and limited options for transportation. Other recurrent answers noted that untreated common visual impairments and hearing loss in older age, as it is often the case in developing countries, are major barriers to the participation of older persons in education and training programmes.

24. Respondents warned about increased inequalities affecting older women, older persons with disabilities, older persons living in remote and rural areas, older persons who speak indigenous languages, as well as older persons in correctional institutions. States should give due regard to the special needs of and challenges faced by these vulnerable groups in the enjoyment of all levels of quality education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services. Many respondents pointed to the insufficient data on older persons and especially those in need of continuing education, which in turn leaves the older persons' need for education and training unaddressed. Collecting and analysing data disaggregated by age, sex, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant to national contexts is key to guiding policy decisions.

## B. Accessibility

### HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS (ICESCR and GC 13)

- *Non-discrimination* - education must be accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable groups, in law and fact, without discrimination on any of the prohibited grounds.
- *Physical accessibility* - education has to be within safe physical reach, either by attendance at some reasonably convenient geographic location (e.g. a neighbourhood school) or via modern technology (e.g. access to a “distance learning” programme).
- *Economic accessibility* - education has to be affordable to all.

### UNESCO STANDARDS (recommendations on adult learning and education)

- Literacy, as the foundation for lifelong learning and a key condition for realizing the right to education, should be universally accessible.

## 1. Policies and programmes to guarantee access to education

25. The accessibility of the right to education and training by older persons was also highlighted in a number of national strategies, policies and action plans reported, such as in Austria, Jordan and Sri Lanka. Some of the aspects addressed by national frameworks include the provision of adult literacy; the promotion of learning opportunities for retirees; increasing participation in continuous education; ensuring high quality and availability of education; the provision of guidance and information about appropriate educational and training opportunities; and ensuring that education is offered close to older persons' homes. Various inputs showcased the transition from policy to practice by the implementation of programmes and projects aimed at providing educational and training services to older persons.

26. The enjoyment of the right to fundamental education is not limited by age, it extends to older persons. With over 141 million illiterate older persons worldwide, specific measures are required to devise curricula and delivery systems that are suitable for them. A good illustration comes from Kenya, where adult basic education curricula that are adapted to older persons' needs have been developed, including the integration of income generating activities and provision of vocational skills. Where cultural practices inhibited the participation of both sexes in the same class, Kenya established separate classes for men and women. For example, in Lebanon older persons benefit from a National Programme for Adult Education, which teaches reading and writing skills, life skills acquisition and general culture. Italy has set-up Provincial Centres for Adult's Education, which offer a range of courses for adult learners that prioritise basic literacy, foreign languages and information technology competences. Bearing in mind that the share of illiterate older women globally (at 67 per cent) is significantly higher than that of men, States should pay particular attention to ensure that basic education is available and accessible to older women.

27. Some respondents noted that adult education remains a low priority, with policy frameworks mainly focusing on younger persons (primary to tertiary education) and skills for employment, which results in underinvestment or lack of implementation of existing strategies on adult education. In many countries, adult education is often non-formal and primarily exists in partnership with local communities and civil society, providing flexibility in content and delivery modalities to meet the local requirements of older persons in circumstances where the formal education system is not yet able to do so.

28. Submissions show a varied level of State involvement in non-formal education. In some countries, the State engages in partnership with stakeholders at the national, regional and local levels. Nigeria, for example, established a Commission for Mass Literacy and Non-Formal Education. In other countries, such as Sweden, the non-formal education system is not covered by the Education Act. Countries should recognise quality non-formal education as a flexible mechanism that can assist the State in meeting its obligations under the right to education as well as ensure that older persons are offered the opportunity to learn at the national standards.

29. Numerous submissions referred to community capacity-building programmes, usually delivered in more informal settings such as senior centres and clubs, reflecting on their importance for older persons as well as on their positive physical and mental health impacts. For instance, in Tuvalu the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Programme delivers programmes geared at enhancing skills to weave and create fish nets, while Australia funds community capacity-building programmes that target older persons from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

30. Older persons have the right to equal access to digital learning and education platforms without discrimination based on age. As technology advances, digital skills and courses on computer and Internet usage are becoming increasingly popular amongst older persons. Several examples at the country level were identified. In Argentina the National Programme of Digital Inclusion and Access to New Technologies implemented by the National Directorate of Policies for Older Adults, facilitates the use of information technologies and provides tablets for persons over 60 years enrolled in the programme. In Cameroon a partnership was set-up between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the African Computer Institute to train persons with disabilities, as well as other target groups including older persons, on information communication

technologies. In Slovenia the State co-sponsors measures focusing on acquisition of information communication technology skills for older person. An innovative programme of digital inclusion called Plan Ibirapitá was launched in Uruguay, that provides older persons with a scholarship, a tablet with mobile internet, as well as a course to learn how to use digital devices.

31. Life-long learning takes place through national organisations, colleges and universities, community non-profit organisations, public libraries, museums, and trade unions. One of the largest providers of life-long learning are the Universities of the Third Age (U3A), which are membership-based volunteer organisations that offer non-accredited courses to older persons. Because U3A depend on volunteering, they may fluctuate in quality. Many traditional universities offer a variety of extension areas that implement education programmes for older persons. Similar to U3A, some of the education programmes implemented by traditional universities are not uniformly regulated at the national level.

32. Older persons have the right to affordable education and life-long learning opportunities that fit their needs, preferences, skills, motivations and diverse identities. Many submissions noted that where no publicly funded offers for adult education and learning are available, the cost must be borne by the individual. Ending of fee subsidies, due to recent economic recession, threatens to stifle participation in formal learning among older persons, who are often unwilling to incur into debt. Several respondents also mentioned difficulties in accessing loans or scholarships to engage in tertiary education or research due to age discrimination.

33. There was broad consensus among respondents that rising retirement ages and people needing or preferring to continue to work into old age are increasingly common. Countries such as Portugal noted the need for all older workers to be equipped with the skills needed to fully engage in the labour market. Other recurrent answers highlighted that employers tend not to encourage skills development of older workers because of assumptions of lower return on investment. Through new agreements, such as the recent 2017 Workforce Development Agreement in Canada, the State is ensuring that more people benefit from employment assistance and skills training, particularly groups under-represented in the workforce, including older persons.

## **2. Available data**

34. Reports on the availability of data or studies suggest heterogeneity among countries. Many respondents identified information provided by censuses on the level of education among the population, including older persons. In countries where literacy is still at the core of the development priorities on the education agenda, the discourse on life-long learning, and therefore the available data, tends to be dominated by the issue of adult literacy.

35. Inputs pointed to the existence of surveys that provide more disaggregated data or are specific to older persons. For instance, in the United Kingdom, while statistics on the participation of age groups in higher education are only available up to 60 years old, a survey of adult participation in learning is carried out annually. The national survey on health, well-being and ageing (SABE) in Colombia, for example, includes information on education for people over 60 years of age. At the European level, for example, Eurostat uses the Adult Education Survey as one of the main data sources on this issue. One Non-Governmental Organisation indicates the existence of a Public Opinion Survey on Life-long Learning carried

in Japan in 2018, which assesses the access, use and satisfaction of older persons concerning educational opportunities.

36. Surveys on economic activity of the population, including labour force participation, workforce development and similar surveys, were identified as another source of relevant data, as they include demographic information, including age, and contain information on skills training and employment assistance, among other dimensions. Some examples of these include The European Union Labour Force Survey, a tool from Eurostat that covers all countries of the European Union and the National Survey of Employment, Unemployment and Underemployment in Ecuador.

37. It is in research projects and studies that data tends to be more concrete on the access of older persons to rights and opportunities in the context of education. Examples of such studies include: 'life-long learning in France and Europe' from the International Longevity Centre in France; a chapter concerning the level of engagement of older persons in educational activities under the Report of the Situation of Older Persons in Poland; and the Report on the Status of Older Persons in Costa Rica, where the issue of education and training is studied across its chapters.

38. Many inputs show that studies and data that expressly address the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older age do not exist or, when they do, are few or limited in scope. Even where information on older persons relevant to education is available, data is patchy, as often education data is not properly aligned with labour data (when applicable), focuses exclusively on literacy indicators or refer to adults without paying specific attention to and, in some cases excluding, persons above 60 years old. On the other hand, the number of studies reported on this issue, as well as the existence of some surveys, reveal increased awareness among countries in developed and developing countries alike.

### **3. Equality and non-discrimination**

39. A majority of submissions framed non-discrimination of older persons in education in general clauses of non-discrimination in their legislation that include age as a ground and would apply to all rights, including that of the right to education.

40. States Parties to the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons identified it as a legislative mandate that explicitly prohibits discrimination for older persons in education. Other international treaties, such as the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights were referenced.

41. Where policies and legislation for older persons exist, the prohibition of discrimination in education for older persons is comprised, such as in Nepal. Respondents identified other pieces of legislation that are relevant to training and capacity building in older adults, particularly in the context of labour legislation. European countries refer to the Employment Equality Directive of 2000 which prohibits discrimination of, inter alia, age, in the field of employment and vocational training and has been transposed into national law by all Member States of the European Union.

42. Inputs indicate that in many countries where age is included under the grounds by which discrimination is prohibited on education, differential treatment is permissible if such unequal treatment is objectively and rationally justified by a legitimate aim, for instance as it concerns positive action to encourage or develop people in an age group that is under-represented or disadvantaged.

43. Beyond the inclusion of age as a prohibited ground of discrimination in education in the law, older persons can experience ageism and age discrimination in relation to the right in education in different ways. In some countries, official competitions are not reserved for older persons and there are age limitations in vocational centres and high schools. Other inputs refer to differential access of older persons to education scholarships and financial aid available to young cohorts.

44. Ageism and ageist stereotypes, as explained under question 2, can also negatively impact the enjoyment of the right to education by older persons. Further, indicators other than age that, nonetheless, affect older persons to a greater degree, can result in the discrimination of older persons in education de facto. For instance, some inputs from national human rights institutions and non-governmental organisations identify physical barriers in regional, rural and remote areas as a factor that negatively impact the actual enjoyment of educational opportunities by older persons.

45. Some respondents consider age as a discriminatory factor in higher education institutions due to the discontinuation of governmental benefits and the generally over age increased economic burden from a growing number of responsibilities. Other respondents noted that while according to national laws, older persons can learn for life, there is discrimination based on the individual economic situation and social status. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees noted that older refugees often do not have access to education and life-long learning opportunities offered to older persons in the national population due to legal or administrative barriers.

### **C. Remedies and Accountability**

46. Mechanisms to lodge complaints and seek redress for denial of the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building of older persons range in substance and procedure. As previously discussed, age is one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination in most legal frameworks pertinent to education. While the right to study at an older age is not guaranteed explicitly in most legal frameworks, it is not denied either.

47. Respondents highlight the need for a rights-based approach to promote awareness, advocate and enhance the availability and accessibility of mechanisms to seek redress in cases of discrimination or denial of the right to education of older persons.

48. Several States reported about administrative and judicial mechanisms in place that older persons can access to demand their right to education. Some countries such as Canada, Iraq and South Africa have instituted mechanisms to help citizens lodge complaints or seek redress in courts of justice, tribunals, local government, ministries, ombudsperson and human rights commissions. Some Member States reported the creation of independent mechanisms to serve

the needs of older persons, while most respondents indicated that they were not warranted as stand-alone mechanisms.

49. Inputs suggest that while the right to education is widely recognized, mechanisms designed to help older persons seek redress are insufficient - hence in general there is no guarantee that violations to the right to education of older persons are adequately addressed. Where general accountability mechanisms are minimal, the right to education for older persons, and especially life-long learning, is not given priority. Most importantly, where mechanisms for redress exist, frequently they comprise administrative barriers and can be inaccessible.

50. Often, older persons are not able to seek redress due to lengthy administrative procedures including tedious online applications, limited legal information and general lack of awareness of their rights. Moreover, low literacy rates amongst older persons, limited access to information and communications technology skills, digital divide, and lack of available information hamper their ability to seek justice.

51. With the emergence of new ways of learning such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), open-learning systems and digital skills, some respondents stressed the importance of digital literacy amongst older persons to facilitate their participation and inclusion in education. Supporting digital literacy, including intergenerational virtual platforms with learning opportunities, and targeted trainings and capacity building could encourage older persons to get online and seek justice related assistance. Other respondents highlighted the need for older persons to acquire such skills, especially where digital and online services (e-government, tele-medicine) are on the rise.

52. Legal reforms were cited by submissions as necessary to safeguard and enhance the capacity of older persons to seek redress. Measures such as establishing direct channels for the right to petition, tutelage, legal aid and enforcement action were mentioned as pertinent to help older persons seek justice. Submissions also articulated the importance of legal amendments and reforms to protect the breach of privacy and security of data of older persons on digital and online learning platforms.

53. Echoing responses to other questions, inputs stressed that in order to properly address violations to the right of education, training, life-long learning and capacity building, the State should strengthen national policies that promote the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building of older persons. This is deemed particularly relevant in developing countries, where older persons' right to education opportunities are scarce.

54. Respondents suggested a lack of policy coherence and coordination, which prevent the implementation of a systematic approach to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building of older persons in both developed and developing countries. There is often a lack of well-defined operational parameters for policy implementation. It was highlighted that the provision of legal information and implementation of public policies could directly help protect the rights of older persons, combat ageism and enable those willing to pursue complaints and appeals within legal frameworks.

55. Several respondents highlighted the need for a United Nations convention on the rights of older persons to hold States accountable in issues relevant to older persons, including the right to education. Other submissions stressed the need for data and information to effectively monitor the services rendered to older persons and better assist older persons to seek redress when their right to education is denied. Respondents also suggested that the lack of mechanisms to lodge complaints and seek redress often aggravate discrimination and ageism, and are also a direct violation of the rights of older persons to education and life-long learning older persons to education and life-long learning.