

12th Working Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, April 2022

Submission on Economic Security

National Legal and Policy Framework

1. Economic and social rights are not inscribed in the Constitution of Mauritius. Since Independence from the U.K in 1968 Mauritius has successfully positioned itself as a welfare state providing a wide range of services, inter alia, health, education, old age pension, which has been enriched with free transport for older persons.

These services and amendments in policies are provided following legislation, for example, the Education Act or Protection of the Elderly Persons Act

2. A person or a household is deemed 'poor' if its resources fall below a threshold or cut off line known as the poverty line. Statistics Mauritius uses the relative poverty line at half the median monthly income per adult equivalent and was estimated at rupees 7,497 in 2017. (US \$: MR 50)
3. Older persons who live in poverty are living in housing units constructed in the 60s. Others are tenants presently living in crowded units.

Older men, when obliged to work after retirement, are offered a simple sinecure in the security services of private companies. Older women are likely to get seasonal jobs in the field, without protection. This oppressive situation applies to all citizens in this category irrespective of caste, gender, religion. Persons living with disability receive a disability allowance up to the age of 60 at which date they start receiving only an old age pension.

4. What data, statistics and research are available regarding older persons living in poverty?

Findings from April 2020, Statistics Mauritius: Poverty Analysis 2017

- a. Compared to all age group groups, poverty was significantly lowest among old people aged 60 years and over – the poverty rate among the old was 4.3 % much lower than 10.4%, the average among all age groups.
- b. Without free health services, the 2017 poverty rate would have been 14% instead of 9.6%
- c. Without free bus transport, the 2017 poverty rate would have been 10 % instead of 9.6 % (older people travel freely)
- d. Average No of persons by selected age group and household category 2017:

Average Household size	Poor Income Households	Middle Income Households	High Income Households
Average No of Elderly (60 years and over)	0.3	0.6	0.7

In 2017, the poverty rate of households without elderly (12.9 %) was significantly higher than that for households with elderly (5.2%)

- e. From 1996/97 to 2017, the situation of households without elderly deteriorated – their poverty rate increased from 7.6 % to 12.9% while that of households with elderly improved significantly.”
- f. As at now, January 2022, there are 5,760 families registered with the Social Register of Mauritius (SRM) to receive a host of assistance. However, the number of older persons in the concerned families is not available.

Progressive realization and the use of maximum available resources

5.
 - a. Provision of old age pension as from 60
 - b. Free medical health care
 - c. Home medical visits
 - d. Carer’s allowance to look after the sick
 - e. Free bus transport
 - f. Under a social tariff scheme, some 70,000 customers whose monthly consumption does not exceed 85 kwh, benefit from concessionary electricity rates.
6. The impact has been limited. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic Government provided direct financial assistance to hotels whose employees were laid off or were made to stay at home. Old age pensions were stretched.
7. Provision of a non-contributive old age pension from the age of 60 whether the person has been an employee or not.

With regards to the life course approach, older persons, the majority of whom seek government medical services, are closely followed for adequate and timely intervention specially on losses of health and functioning. There is a yearly flu vaccination programme of older persons.

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Older persons are informed on healthy living, balanced diet and physical activities for good health maintenance.

Equality and non-discrimination

8. Training on rights of older persons

Sensitization campaigns addressing students, younger adults and older persons, and in this context encourage intergenerational dialogue.

Older persons above 60 are not eligible for bank loans to start a business.

Older people have the right to inheritance if proved genuine.

9. Remedies and redress

a. At the moment older persons cannot lodge formal complaints against the authorities if they feel their economic rights are denied.

They can avail of the following:

- Police and ultimately a Court of Justice
- Equal Opportunities Commission
- National Human Rights Commission

b. The economic, social and cultural rights should be inscribed in the Constitution so people can lodge complaints