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**UN Ageing Program**

The human rights for the Ageing

**Introduction**

There is no single paradigm for old age and ageing both of these relate to multi-faceted process that is determined not only by the passage of time but also by physiological, social and cultural factors.

A distinction has to be made between the chronological and aspects of old age and it’s social construct and indication.

According to chronological criterion used by a majority of the countries in the region in their legislation, old age begins at 60, although this threshold has changed more in the recent years than at any other time in the entire history of the Western World. A t the start of the nineteenth century, a person was considered to be old at age 40, whereas, today it is difficult to get a definite age at which a person can be said to be old.

**Concept of old age- chronological, social and physiological age**

A definition of the concept of old age can be approached from at three different stand points based on chronological, physiological and social factors. Chronological age is essentially biological and is manifested in different degrees of various functional disorders. It refers to age as measured in years. When this criterion is used, old age is defined as beginning at 60 or 65 years and is often set by law for older adults or senior citizens.

At this stand point, ageing contains changes in person’s place within society since many responsibilities and privileges especially those associated with employment – are determined by his / her chronological age.

**Impact of Ageing (Liberia)**

Across Liberia, aged people have to rely on their other family members for support. This to some extend owes to the near 20 years of civil war that destabilized the country leaving behind misery among the population in the face of lack of structures (private or public programs) that could carter to vulnerable as well as old aged people. In most developing countries where these structures are established, the issues affecting their functions to achieve the goals leading to their setup leaves such structures vulnerable and unable to make the contributions to ensure that old folks and vulnerable or disable people are carter for.

Unlike in western developed societies where strong organizations run programs that care for elderly people and people with disability, the burden to care for old people in under developed countries remains unattended as a result, poverty becomes all the most entrenched. In the latter case, many old folks in need are abandoned by their relatives and are left unto themselves.

**National Social Security and welfare corporation**

A social welfare corporation was setup in the early to mid-1970s when national government made it a point with emphasis on lifting mass of the population from mat to mattress. The philosophy in a limited way focused on directing care to workers at late age and retirement. The implementation of the philosophy mandated both the employers and employees share the cost of old age once the employees has attained his / her retirement or is at age 65 years during their employ. To this effect, benefits are accrued based on the employee’s monthly contributions to either the retirement, insurance and or social fund.

The issues among others with this system of caring for age people is that the safety net is narrowed to contributors made to the scheme while there is prospect of accrued benefits. Others not employed (has not contributed to the scheme) and has attained the retirement age or an elderly person across the board, not covered in any of the scheme does not benefit. This understates howbeit, the importance of an established and functional social safety net that works to care for the ageing or old folks.

**Challenges of aged adults**

Ageing is on the rise at a very alarming rate across the world. Ageing comes with:

1. Shifting disease burden,
2. Increased expenditure on health and long-term care,
3. Labor force shortages dissaving and the potential problems with old age income security.

In less developed countries, example Liberia and many others, challenges for elderly people age 65 years and above are enormous, this phenomena’s consistent in nearly all of the low-income earning countries where there are limited or weak public or private sector programs designed to provide safety services to the elderly and old folks above 65 and are in need of care.

In this weak situation, caring for this segment of the population has become the responsibility of their next in kin who must care for the disadvantaged relatives (elderly) while catering for themselves and their children. This scenario further worsens the already weak financial wellbeing presently of the family as well the family’s future.

**Lower Economic Growth**

Ageing directly has a negative impact of gross domestic product (GDP) in as much that ageing shrinks the labor force slowing down growth as fewer working people pay more to support safety net structures where they exist and are functional. At the same time, public budgets strain under the burden of higher health cost and retirement programs that target old folks and retirees.

Over the last decay, to present number of older folks in less affluent countries increased considerably compared to increases in developed countries. The increases in ageing are driven by the corresponding declines in fertility and improvement in longevity. Knowledge sharing, acknowledging rights and responsibility of society toward the vulnerable sector(population) is a hall mark in developed societies that keep the population

**Risk Factors (Ageing)**

Ageing and the protection of human rights current situation and out look

Risks associated with old age and their manifestations

1. Poverty – less or lack of economic resources
2. Lack of visibility – lack of a place on the development agenda
3. Powerlessness – loss or lack of the ability to attain greater (Among all is discrimination)

**Ageing current situation and outlook mostly in the low-income countries**

There shouldn’t be conflicting interpretation of the actuality, meaning and concept of old age given that:

1. Older Persons are a low priority - Your job will never be any bigger that your imagination makes it. A mind fill with negative attitudes is more dangerous than a sick body, for its sickness is always contagious. On society’s development agenda as they are seen as being incapable of making a contribution to the development effort or of benefiting from it. They are thus regarded as the beneficiaries of special measure within a context of scarce resources.
2. Older persons are viewed as impediment to development because of their economically dependent position. They are perceived as being a drain on scarce resources, precisely because they have traditional values and beliefs that are seen as running counter to the changes associated with economic growth and modernization.
3. Older persons are regarded as a development resource and a back-up labor force.
4. Older persons are seen as potential victims of modernization because their status declines as countries develop.
5. The ageing process as experienced by individuals, can be addressed from a number of different perspectives each of which is underpinned by a different theory. They should also be biological, social and psychological for ageing