



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations

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STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

DURING

**THE SIXTH SESSION
OF THE
OPEN ENDED WORKING GROUP ON AGEING (OEWG)**

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Chairperson,

On behalf of my delegation, I wish to take this opportunity to thank you and the Bureau for your good work and guidance in leading the Open Ended Working Group and in the organization of this Sixth Session of the Open Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG) in which we are honoured to participate.

Chairperson,

The Global Population of persons aged 60 and above is the fastest growing global age group, it is time for the World to envision a new paradigm that aligns demographic ageing with economic and social growth while protecting the human rights of older people.

Chairperson,

The Madrid Plan of Action and the Africa Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing have been Kenya's key reference documents as we address issues of older persons. Kenya has also actively engaged in the development of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa which was adopted during the Fourth Session of the AU Conference of Ministries of Social Development held in Addis Ababa Ethiopia in May 2014 and which we believe will guide future engagements on advancing the rights of older persons.

Chairperson,

Since independence the government of Kenya has taken bold steps to enact and implement various frameworks and programmes aimed at addressing the welfare of our older members of society whose population has rapidly grown from a modest population of 270,000 to the current 1.9 million.

The Government of Kenya upholds the rights, welfare and dignity of older persons as a special category of citizens with both human and constitutional rights. The rights of older persons, the rights have been enshrined in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

Chairperson,

The Government through the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services has also developed a National Policy on Older Persons and Ageing (2009). The policy recognizes that older persons are an important segment of the National Population whose rights must be recognized, respected, protected and promoted. The government has also incorporated a broad flagship project under the Kenya Vision 2030 development framework, which establishes a consolidated Fund for older persons and an Older Persons Cash Transfer Programme for poor and vulnerable older persons.

Chairperson,

Allow me to highlight other initiatives which the government of Kenya has undertaken. They include:

- Launching a new **policy on population and national development**, to guide national planning for economic growth (2011). The policy, for which Kenya received the 2013 Resolve Award from the Global Leaders Council for Reproductive Health, embodies key considerations for older persons as one of its key programme plans.
- Setting up the **Social Protection Fund (SPF)** to address drought and food crises through access to credit and cash transfer on flexible terms for poor and vulnerable households with older citizens above 65 years of age.
- Enacting the **Kenya Health Sector Strategic Investment Plan (2013-2017)** which identifies a list of essential health services to all groups of persons, with specific acknowledgement of elderly persons above 65 years as being among those who are entitled.
- Establishing a **Health & Ageing unit** within the Ministry of Health that seeks to address the health concerns of older persons.
- Establishing **National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC)** which is a Constitutional Commission mandated to spearhead efforts to reduce gender inequalities and the discrimination against women, men, persons with disabilities, the youth, children, the elderly, minority and marginalized communities.

Chairperson,

The government has adopted a multi sectorial approach to advance the rights and aspirations of older persons. To this end, the government is working very closely with key sectors of government, NGOs like Help Age International, Development Partners and other local NGOs and CSOs. The focus has been on mainstreaming issues of older persons in sectoral policies and programmes, health, nutrition, provision of shelter, social support to avoid loneliness, awareness creation on needs and aspirations of older persons, age friendly income generating projects, psycho social support, food donations, HIV/AIDS education and information and monitoring of the cash transfer programme that is run by the government.

Chairperson,

The Sixth Session provides us with an opportunity to share experiences on measures and actions that will improve the lives of older persons. In the last couple of years Kenya has been involved in the ongoing discussions on the **Post 2015 Development Agenda** and the call for an international convention on the rights of older persons. We look forward to a post 2015 agenda that provides for a universal development framework which takes into account poverty eradication, environmental sustainability, inequality, human rights and global responsibility. Older people are contributors to sustainable development and

poverty eradication and there is therefore need for a dynamic and universal response to ageing in the framework. We cannot speak of eradicating poverty if we do not include older persons in all our plans and goals. We firmly believe that for the world to be equitable and inclusive, it must include people who are 60 years and over.

Chairperson,

We note the mention of encouraging the development of policies and plans to take care of the ageing, we are of the view that it would be important to specifically mention the inclusion of ageing issues on the Social Protection Policies of developing countries, given that most of the ageing persons in these countries are not pensionable.

In light of changing demographics, social and economic circumstances, it is important for developing countries to put more attention on the adjustment of pension, social security, health and long-term care systems to sustain economic growth and development.

Chairperson,

We wish to encourage developing countries to utilize social networks and community-based approaches to assist the ageing population; and in line with the medical plan of action to assist the willing ageing population to continue to participate in economics and income generating activities.

There is need for critical and continuing international assistance to help developing countries to pursue policies for the ageing population including mainstreaming ageing and the concern of older persons into national development frameworks and poverty reduction strategies; including having focal points at specific United Nations Country level offices.

Chairperson,

In conclusion, Kenya supports the establishment of this Open Ended Working Group on Ageing by the General Assembly to further spearhead rights of older persons. We recognize that older Persons face unique legal, social, institutional and other barriers and challenges which impact negatively on full enjoyment of their rights and development. It is our conviction that an international legal instrument will strengthen the rights of older persons.

I thank you.