

Open-ended Working Group on Ageing

Tenth working session

General Discussion

Item 5. Measures to enhance the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons

INDIA STATEMENT

By

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First Secretary**

15 April 2019

Madam Chair,

1. My delegation congratulates the Chair and the bureau members on their election and looks forward to fruitful deliberations during this session.
2. India aligns with the statement made on behalf of Group of 77.
3. We live in a world where people live longer than ever before. It is estimated that by 2050, there will be more people older than 60 years than those below 15 years.
4. Population ageing has been on the global agenda for some time and there are global frameworks that address the challenges posed by growing number of older women and men in the society.
5. The adoption of 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing provides a roadmap for addressing challenges of an ageing society and realization of human rights of older persons. The core human rights instruments promote and protect human rights of older persons, including their right to development. The 2030 Agenda also recognizes the importance of realizing their full potential and their contribution for inclusive development.

6. We need timely action based on the existing global framework and ensure that action should not fall behind this demographic trend. Increased investments, political will and addressing gaps in data and statistics are key to concerted response.

7. In this context we welcome the priority themes of the Working Group this year.

8. The percentage of the senior citizens in population in India has been growing at an increasing rate in recent years and the trend is likely to continue. The share of population over the age of 60 is projected to increase from 8 percent to nearly 20 percent in 2050.

9. Fulfilling needs for services and social protection for senior citizens, protection of their rights and enabling them to contribute in the development process are priorities for India.

10. India's Constitution enjoins the State to make effective provisions for securing the right to public assistance in cases of old age. In accordance with this, the Senior Citizens Act of 2007 has made care and maintenance of parents by their children obligatory and justiciable. In cases of abuse, the Act provides the older adults the right to approach a dedicated tribunal.

11. The National Policy on Senior Citizens envisages state support for financial and food security, health care, shelter and protection against exploitation. The National Council of Senior Citizens is the highest advisory body for policymaking on the entire gamut of issues related to elderly.

12. At the operational level the Integrated Program for Senior Citizens and Senior Citizen Welfare Fund facilitate inter-sectoral coordination within Government and provide assistance to civil society and local bodies for their services to senior citizens.

13. Aids and assistive living devices are provided to senior citizens for age-related disabilities through a dedicated programme. There are also provisions for institutional support to widows and older women in vulnerable situations.

14. National Old Age Pension Scheme and a subsidized food distribution programme provide income and nutritional security to older persons in poverty. In recent years focus has been on ensuring income security in old age for those employed in unorganized sector, through provisions of co-contributory and fixed pension plans as well as insurance cover at a concessional rate.

15. The Continuing Education and Adult Education programmes in India extend literacy, vocational and quality of life training options, with special focus on reducing gender gap in literacy and post-literacy capacity building.

16. The University Grants Commission has accorded priority to lifelong learning and formulated guidelines to facilitate participation of adult learners in the university system. Open education and distance learning platforms enable persons of all ages to fulfil their aspirations.

17. India has recently launched the world's largest healthcare programme "National Health Protection Scheme". Increased coverage through the programme, including hospitalizations, comprehensive insurance for entire family and reduction in the prices of essential medicines and implants seek to cater to unmet healthcare needs of older persons.

18. Focus is also given on training healthcare workforce in geriatric care and build dedicated facilities to meet their health needs.

19. Senior citizens in India also enjoy concessional rates of travel in railways and other public transport and higher rates of interest on their deposits with banks.

Mr. Chairman,

20. Ageing is irreversible and inevitable. We must better equip people in earlier age cohorts, so that they remain in good physical and mental health and continue their involvement in family and community throughout the ageing process. Stronger partnerships between civil society, community and families are necessary to complement the actions taken by Governments in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

21. India remains committed to taking all possible steps towards improving quality of life of older persons and protecting their rights and dignity through full implementation of Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the 2030 Agenda.

I thank you.