



On-line Conversation

Role of human rights institutions, parliaments and civil society in protecting the rights of older persons and persons with disabilities in Covid-19 responses

24th June 2020 - 14.45 – 16.00 Kigali Time

Inequalities, ageism and discrimination among older persons and people with disabilities in Africa has deepened with the outbreak of Covid-19. The rights of older persons and persons with disabilities have perpetually had minimal political support resulting in inadequate policy interventions, further making it difficult to access services or utilize their ever-increasing capabilities. Majority of older persons and persons with disabilities live in poverty and experience neglect, abuse and violence. With the African human rights mechanism focusing primarily on civil and political rights and parliamentary systems focusing on political power play with some level of interest in economic growth and infrastructural development, social and economic rights are not adequately covered.



Social and economic rights are part of the foundation of the wellbeing and dignity of the population particularly for vulnerable groups like older persons and people living with disabilities and need to be addressed side by side with the civil and political rights. Covid-19 has and will continue to have a negative impact on older persons and persons with disabilities. The lockdowns and social distancing regulations limit their already complex social interactions thereby compounding their psychosocial wellbeing. This has led to an increase in cases of mental illnesses poor health conditions and weak family/community support systems.

Considering the potential negative long-term impact of the pandemic among older people and persons with disabilities in Africa, NSINDAGIZA Organization coordinating the Rwanda Leave No One Behind Network, and URUMURI RW'IZABUKURU (older persons coalition) together with Enosh – The Israeli Mental Health Association, Africa HelpAge Global Network, Network of African National Human Rights Institutions and the Center for Human Rights of the University of Pretoria, are organizing an online conversation on *"the role of human rights institutions, parliaments and civil society in protection of the rights of older persons and persons with disabilities in COVID-19 response"*.

The pandemic is threatening the dignity, wellbeing and human rights of older persons and persons with disability. For older persons it can result in high mortality rates, threatening longevity gains and exacerbating ageism, abuse, neglect and other inequalities. However, the pandemic can also provide opportunities for growth towards community-based solidarity and services.

The online conversation will be **moderated by Carole Agengo, Regional Director, HelpAge International – Africa Regional Hub.**

Representatives from the following institutions will speak:

- Government of Rwanda – Opening Remarks
- Parliament
- Network of African National Human Rights Institutions
- Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria
- Coalition of Societies for the Rights of Older Persons in Nigeria
- Enosh - The Israeli Mental Health Association

To join the meeting, kindly click this link: [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

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