

The **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa** (Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons) was adopted in January 2016.

It is the product of years of consultations to enshrine the commitments made by African States in the 2002 African Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing in regional human right law. This is crucial given that older women and men in Africa continue to experience discrimination, abuse, neglect and violence in all spheres of life.

Older women in particular often face the triple jeopardy of sexism, disempowerment and ageism. The adoption of the Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons led to widespread celebration by older persons and the wider society who viewed it as a commitment by African leaders to make ageing a positive experience. However, for the Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons to come into force, it needs at least **15 member states** of the African Union to ratify it. As of July 2019, only one state, Lesotho has ratified it.

**If you need more information on ratifying the Protocol, please contact:**

**Patience Mpani**

Manager, Women's Rights Unit,  
Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria  
[patience.mpani@up.ac.za](mailto:patience.mpani@up.ac.za)

**Roseline Kihumba**

International & Regional Policies Coordinator  
HelpAge International - Africa Office  
[roseline.kihumba@helpage.org](mailto:roseline.kihumba@helpage.org)

For more information on the **#AgeWithRights** Campaign, visit [www.chr.up.ac.za/AgeWithRights](http://www.chr.up.ac.za/AgeWithRights)



**Centre for  
Human Rights**  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA



**Let's RATIFY the  
Protocol on the Rights  
of Older Persons in Africa**





African member states must commit to the **Africa We Want** where people of all ages prosper, including older persons.

**RATIFY** and **IMPLEMENT** the Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa **NOW!**

### WHY should states ratify the Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons?

- ✓ The Protocol is a transformative legal instrument providing norms and standards in ensuring respect and protection of the rights of older persons in Africa.
- ✓ Its adoption would ensure that older persons are treated with dignity and respect, and as equal members of society.
- ✓ Ratifying the Protocol shows governments' commitment towards guaranteeing and safeguarding the rights of older persons.
- ✓ When older persons' rights and entitlements related to social, economic, civil, political and cultural spheres are protected, families and society are able to benefit from the potential and talents of older persons, thereby enabling the continent to fully realise its demographic dividend.

### What **IMPACT** will the ratification of the Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons have?

- ✓ The Protocol has the potential to significantly improve the well-being and dignity of millions of older women and men across Africa.
- ✓ The Protocol will serve as a tool for the development of age-friendly policies and legislation that recognise the potential and talents of older persons. This will ensure the full enjoyment of their human rights and freedoms in increasingly ageing societies.
- ✓ The Protocol will set standards necessary for the elimination of age discrimination to ensure access to justice and equal protection before the law.
- ✓ The Protocol will fast-track access to rights and entitlements of older persons related to social protection, health and care including long term care services, employment, education, information, and communication technology.
- ✓ The Protocol will help accelerate age appropriate changes in public systems, structures, policies and legal frameworks including age friendly infrastructures.
- ✓ The Protocol will provide standards and guidelines to help remove the stigma associated with ageing. This will encourage more positive images of ageing and raise awareness of the contribution by older persons to society.
- ✓ The Protocol will help hold governments to account for their actions towards the protection of the rights of older persons and create a continental minimum standard of protection for older persons for all member states.