



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
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Centre for Human Rights
Faculty of Law

PRESS STATEMENT

CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, HELPAGE INTERNATIONAL AND MOREMI INITIATIVE FOR WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA

10 August 2018

"It's time for Africa to show its commitment to older people's rights and issues"

Accra, Ghana, 8th August 2018: The Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria in partnership with HelpAge Global Network in Africa and Moremi Initiative for Women's Leadership in Africa, is organizing Policy Dialogue with Key Government Institutions including the African Union Social Affairs Department responsible for coordination and ratification of the African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons (hereafter the Protocol) on 8th of August 2018 and a regional expert meeting for West Africa on the theme "*Human rights of older women in West Africa: The need for enhanced protection*".

The expert meeting will bring together government representatives, national human rights institutions, academia and civil society organisations from countries in West Africa Region with the aim of sharing experience and learning to help expedite the ratification and implementation of the Protocol. These events are a series of activities the Centre for Human Rights has lined up in its long-term campaign on [#AgeWithRights](#) to contribute to the visibility and protection of older women in gender equality discourse.

The twenty sixth ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union in January 2016 marked the greatest milestone for older people in Africa when Africa Heads of States adopted the Protocol. The adoption paved way for African Member States to sign, ratify and implement the Protocol to guarantee the protection and promotion of the rights of older people in Africa. Almost 3 years later only five countries have signed (Benin, Comoros, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Zambia), but no member state has ratified this protocol. While support among African member states for a new international UN convention on the rights of older persons is growing, African member states participation in the process towards a new UN convention remains limited.

The ratification and implementation of the Protocol has potential to contribute to greater enjoyment of human rights by older people in Africa and can also support African member states contribution to the UN convention for the rights of older people discussions. These would drastically improve the wellbeing and quality of life of the current 64 million older men and women in Africa, a number that is anticipated to grow to 212 million by 2030.

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In Africa region, older people remain excluded in human rights and sustainable development discourse due to limited understanding of older people's rights. Ageism is widely tolerated resulting in negative perception and attitudes towards old age and older people. As a result, older people continue to live in poverty or extreme poverty while experiencing discrimination, thus increasing their risks to neglect, abuse and violence.

We are calling on all stakeholders from government ministries and agencies, national human rights institutions, academia, civil society and the public to join hands to ensure current and future generations across the continent lead dignified, productive and prosperous lives. An accelerated ratification and implementation of the Protocol as well as support for the development, adoption and implementation of a UN convention of the rights of older people is needed. For the above to happen, political will, adequate financial allocation, improved capacity building and availability of evidence on older people is needed to ensure age friendly legal, policy and programmatic frameworks at all levels to ensure everyone [#AgeWithRights](#)

For more information, please contact:

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