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The Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and, with reference to its questionnaire in relation to Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/44/7 on human rights and climate change, has the honour to enclose herewith the reply of the Portuguese authorities.

The Permanent Mission of Portugal avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 22 December 2020



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MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS
Direção-Geral de Política Externa

Questionnaire in relation to Human Rights Council resolution A/HRC/RES/44/7 on human rights and climate change	Cont./DGPE/SPM/ N° 146135/2020
Answers from Portugal	Autor: MS
	Proc.º: DGPE/SPM-207/2020
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1. Please describe the impacts of the adverse effects of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights of older persons. Where possible, please share specific examples and stories.

- Older persons living in rural areas and on the poverty threshold level, dependent on subsistence agriculture, may lose considerable income, thus affecting their subsistence, well-being, citizenship, socialization, care, resulting in potential situations of isolation and loneliness that can also affect their global health;
- Some older persons are in situations of economic vulnerability, which are reflected in the fragile conditions of the habitat, social inequalities and make them more vulnerable to climate change events;
- They can also suffer from related illnesses, infections, pathogens and the necessary health treatment can become more difficult due to economic and mobility losses.
- Inequalities may grow, as well as insecurity in regard to the consumption of food and water.
- Social impact of forest fires in Portugal: in addition to the costs of housing loss and suppression, forest fires have caused soil degradation and accelerated depopulation (and ageing) in many rural areas. Depopulation and ageing are a demographic/social trend aggravated by forest fires due to reduced productivity, precarious living conditions and difficult access to resources and opportunities resulting from soil degradation. As a consequence, the working age population tends to migrate to urban areas, land is abandoned, and rural areas become socially isolated.
- Impacts of extreme temperatures: increased mortality, hospitalization and emergency care; decompensation of chronic diseases.

Specific examples:

- Land degradation; land abandonment; depopulation, urban migration; rural ageing and social isolation;
- A Bulletin updates the evolution, access and demand for healthcare by citizens on a daily basis, namely in Primary Health Care, Hospital Health Care, Long Term Care, Health line SNS 24 (808 24 24 24) and INEM



MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS
Direção-Geral de Política Externa

(National Institute for Medical Emergency), providing information on time, useful to the population and health sector partners for an adequate preparation of their response. (<https://www.sns.gov.pt/plano-de-contingencia-sazonal>)

2. Please describe any specific policy, legislation, practice or strategy that addresses the nexus between climate change and the rights of older persons. In particular, please share any information related to policies that ensure the participation of older persons in the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures; learning from the knowledge and experience of older persons. Please note and identify any relevant mechanisms for ensuring accountability for these commitments, including their means of implementation.

Measures to tackle depopulation (as well as ageing and isolation in rural areas) and urban migration trends:

- Inland Value-Added Programme (Resolution 16/2020): incentives are granted to small entrepreneurs, workers and self-employed persons whenever they move to work or create small businesses in territories of the Inland, with the objective of implementing and deepening public policies that contribute to make the country territorially more balanced. Such incentives may be monetary (covering transport and installation) or in kind (access to social services).
- Incentives are also granted to workers with a public employment contract, whenever they move to the territories of the Inland (either in a mobility scheme or in a telework scheme) to take up permanent or temporary positions in those territories.
- Such incentives may be monetary or in kind, such as: guarantee of school transfer for the children of either spouse or unmarried partner; and extension of the period of leave by two days during the period of employment.
- Regarding territories of the Inland, incentives described above are cumulative with incentives to hire young persons looking for their first job, the long-term unemployed and the very long-term unemployed (Decree-Law N. 72/2017). Accordingly, employers based in territories of the Inland that offer permanent contracts to young persons looking for their first job or to persons who have been unemployed long-term or very long-term may benefit from a temporary discount on their social security contributions for such workers, even if those workers already benefit from other financial benefits within the Inland Value-Added Programme.



MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS
Direção-Geral de Política Externa

Climate Change Health Adaptation Strategies - Health Sector:

- The Resolution of the Council of Ministers 56/2015 of 30 July approves the national Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2020, which sets out the vision and objectives of national climate policy for Portugal. <https://dre.pt/home/-/dre/69905665/details/maximized?serie=I&dreId=69905655>
- Order 6234/2016 of 11 May, states the constitution of the Human Health Sectoral Working Group. This Order defines the role of the different entities and the general procedures of articulation between them in the Health Sector. <https://dre.pt/pesquisa/-/search/74411142/details/normal?l=1/en>
- In the current Portuguese legal framework, the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy - Health Sector will consist of all five Regional Strategies (Order 6234/2016).
- The five Regional Health Administrations (North, Centre, Lisbon and Tagus Valley, Alentejo and Algarve) elaborate and implement their Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategies - Health Sector, in accordance, inter alia, with the Seasonal Health Contingency Plan and the Water for Human Consumption Sanitation Program, according to the specificities of each region and taking into account the corresponding means and infrastructures.
- The Directorate-General for Health is responsible for ensuring the general coordination functions of the Health Sector at the level of the Ministry of Health.
- The Climate Change Health Adaptation Strategies in the Health Sector at the regional and national levels is a global planning strategy but it can also include specific specifications for older persons. The base of the Strategies is the Assessment of Risks to the Population and to the Health Services, followed by the evaluation, definition and implementation of the Adaptation Actions.

Contingency Seasonal Health Plans:

- The Seasonal Health Plans consist of a warning system. This system also includes the heat waves and cold temperatures. Information about the National Seasonal Health Plan is available at the webpage www.dgs.pt.

<https://www.dgs.pt/documentos-e-publicacoes/plano-de-contingencia-saude-sazonal-modulo-inverno-2019-referenciais-pdf.aspx>

<https://www.dgs.pt/documentos-e-publicacoes/plano-de-contingencia-saude-sazonal-modulo-verao-2019-referenciais1.aspx>



MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS
Direção-Geral de Política Externa

4. Please, describe any mechanisms and tools that are in place to measure and monitor the impacts of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights of older persons.

- Social structures and services for older persons are some of the key elements available to support them, covering their fundamental needs and stability, as well as monitoring and ensuring the effective exercise of their human rights.
- Environment and health indicators
- Evaluation of the Climate Change Health Adaptation Strategies - Health Sector
- Evaluation of the National and Regional Contingency Seasonal Health Plans

5. Please, identify and share examples of good practices and challenges in the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the human rights of older persons in the context of the adverse effects of climate change, including any age-appropriate or sensitive support services that are provided.

- The approach to support older persons aims to reduce the increasing risks of situations of vulnerability, through its prevention, reduction, adaptation, and related protection, at the economic, social and cultural levels, with an active participation in community life;
- The pandemic situation has led to the closure of Day and Sociability Centres to close and to the confinement of older persons in their homes. This situation presents a challenge, partially balanced by an increase in Home Support, that can result in insufficient social assistance and more fragile health;
- A bonus for co-payment of home support was defined, limited in time;
- The possibility of revising and reducing family co-payments for social structures and services was defined, due to the evolution of the family income;
- Protocols were carried with entities with financial difficulties to maintain social support activities, finance beneficiaries and workers, personal protective equipment, isolation materials and disinfection products, as well as to test workers in residential structures;
- A line of financial support for the social sector was defined, aimed at treasury difficulties, due to the pandemic situation.
- In order to reduce unemployment for special social groups, such as older workers exposed to long-term unemployment, employers of very long term unemployed (this means, aged 45 years or over who have been registered as unemployed for 25 months or more) can benefit from a reduction on



MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS
Direção-Geral de Política Externa

social security contributions. The reduction on contributions exists to benefit workers encouraging employers to offer them a permanent employment contract (Decree-Law N. 72/2017).

National Contingency Seasonal Health Plan

- Specific Guidelines for older persons
- Specific seasonal flu vaccination plan for older persons

6. Please, include examples and good practices that highlight international and multilateral cooperation and approaches that are implemented in close consultations with and with the active involvement of older persons, including through their representative organizations.

NCD Platform Or NCD Alliance:

- National Health Plan benefited from broad and active consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. NHP recognized that improving health equity and tackling inequalities is a challenge in the current economic environment, particularly where health and other social programs are being reduced. The National Health Plan recognized that all existing inequalities should be considered in terms of the wider social determinants, and a whole-of-government and whole-of-society response. In addition, consideration is given to achieving a balance of action from initiatives that target the most disadvantaged to more universal actions to tackle the social determinants of inequities across the gradient.
- In line with NHP an Active and Healthy Aging National Strategy was proposed. For this purpose, Portugal is committed to the WHO Global Strategy and Plan of Action for Healthy Aging and to the European Union's Proposals for Action for the Promotion of Active and Healthy Aging and Solidarity between Generations. ENEAS aims to create a society where the aging process, throughout the life cycle, will provide high levels of health, well-being, quality of life and personal fulfilment to older persons and in which all will experience an active, dignified and healthy ageing. The mission of this strategy is to promote health and well-being, participation, non-discrimination, inclusion, security, research and innovation in order to increase older persons' functional capacity, autonomy and quality of life as they age.

