

Human Rights Council

One-day Intersessional seminar on the protection of the family

Theme: The impact of the implementation by States of their obligations under relevant provisions of international human rights law with regard to the protection of the family on the role of the family in supporting the protection and promotion of human rights of older persons

Date: Monday, 11 June, 2018

Place: Palais des Nations, Room XVII, Geneva

I. Mandate:

This One-day intersessional seminar is convened by the Human Rights Council, with the support of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, pursuant to the Human Rights Council resolution [35/13](#) entitled “Protection of the family: role of the family in supporting the promotion and protection of human rights of older persons”.

II. Background and Objectives:

The main objective and focus of the seminar is to examine the impact of the implementation by States on their obligations under relevant provisions of international law with regard to the protection of the family on the role of the family in supporting the protection and promotion of the human rights of older persons, and to discuss challenges and best practices in this regard. The seminar will have the participation of Member States and other relevant stakeholders, including National Human Rights Institutions, academic experts and civil society organizations.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and should be protected by society and the State. The family is a strong force for cohesion and integration, intergenerational solidarity and social development, and plays a crucial role in the preservation of cultural identity, traditions, morals, heritage and the value systems of society. Potential contribution of the family to society, national development and the achievements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the promotion and protection of human rights, deserves wider recognition by the international community.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs comes at a time of a significant demographic transformation taking place across the world. Population ageing is truly a major global trend that affects all countries. United Nations estimated that in 2017, there were 962 million people aged 60 or over in the world, comprising 13 per cent of the global population. With the trends in the overall population growth, this group of population is projected to grow to 1.4 billion by 2030 and further to 2.1 billion.

This demographic shift makes it urgent to ensure that older persons, who are becoming an increasing part of the population of our societies, can fully participate in all spheres of social life.

There are ample evidence that older persons can make important contributions to economic and social development with their experience, skills and knowledge, both in formal and informal sectors. Older persons, particularly older women, also play a vital role within families as care-givers for spouses, grandchildren and other relatives, which often remain unrecognized and undervalued. In addition, many older persons contribute to strengthening social capital by actively participating in community and civic life. These are all essential parts of sustainable development that foster dignity and well-being of all.

Families play an important role in supporting their members, including older persons. Families are the first and most immediate environment where older persons can develop their potential and enjoy a fulfilling life. At the same time, greater reliance on informal cares by family members also needs to be accompanied by strengthened protection of and adequate support to family carers who face particular challenges including non-recognition of their work, loss of job opportunities and psychological distress.

Ageism and discrimination based on age pose significant risks to the human rights of older persons. Neglect, abuse and violence against older persons takes many forms – physical, psychological, emotional, financial – and take place in every setting, including within the family. Older women are at greater risk of physical and psychological abuse, and some harmful traditional and customary practices result in abuse and violence directed at older women, often exacerbated by poverty and lack of access to legal protection.

In recognition of the positive contributions of the family and older persons as well as challenges facing them, this seminar aims to:

- Identify obligations of States and responsibilities of other parties under international law with regard to the support and protection of the family and of the human rights of older persons;
- Highlight the role of the family and identify challenges they face in providing long-term care and support to older persons;
- Identify appropriate measures States and other stakeholders including families can take in order to combat ageism, age-based discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect against older persons;
- Identify good practices regarding the contributions of the family in supporting the protection and promotion of human rights of older persons.

A summary report of the seminar will be presented to the thirty-ninth session of the Human Rights Council in September 2018.

For further information:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/IntersessionalSeminarProtectionFamilyHROlderPersons.aspx>

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