

Question 1: Please provide information on the current situation of the human rights of older persons, including particular challenges and threats that may prevent the full realization of their rights.

Mongolia's population is ageing rapidly and older persons (aged 60 years and over) are projected to increase from an estimated 125 thousand at the turn of the century to more than 800 thousand by 2050. Older persons who at present comprise 7 per cent of Mongolia's population will constitute 25 per cent of the population by 2050. The projected increase is largely explained by the rapid decline in the total fertility rate from 7.0 in 1975 to 2.3 in 2000, the largest decline in fertility registered in any country during the last quarter of the 20th century.

Elderly population is facing a number of challenges that prevent the full realization of their rights. The key challenge is financial security of the older persons. Traditionally, older persons have relied on income of their own earnings, family transfer payments and government handouts both in the form of social pensions and subsidies. Though the tradition of adult offspring and other relatives providing support for older persons remains strong, this support is rapidly shrinking as a result of declining family sizes and increasing out-migration. With widespread unemployment and underemployment in the country, it is becoming increasingly more difficult for older persons to find productive employment and earn their own income. Hence, it is becoming evident that increasing reliance will have to be placed on social pensions (that is, cash transfers from the Government) to guarantee income security for the elderly Mongolians and safeguard them from poverty.

Due to their financial insecurity, the rights of older people to enjoy decent lives are violated to a great extent. There is extensive number of elderly who live in slum areas with no clean water source, with no central heating and who lack nutrition. Due to poor development of infrastructure and transport services, elderly population faces difficulties when they want to participate in social lives and be active members of society.

Question 2: Please provide information on existing legislation, policies and programmes to protect and promote the human rights of older persons.

Our country has made considerable efforts to ensure rights of elderly to fully participate in all processes of development and benefit from it equally and to improve legal and policy environment with aim to provide them with all opportunities to be one of the active social members. As a result, legal basis for social welfare and security, health care and adequate livelihood of elderly has been created in certain extent. A number of laws and regulations, resolutions and decrees have been issued and enforced since 1990.

Several laws including Labour Code, Law on Health, Law on Social Insurance, Law on Citizen's Health Insurance and Law on Social Welfare, have legalized issues concerning the development of the aged population and creation of favourable environment for their lives.

The Government of Mongolia has successfully implemented the National Programme on Health and Social Protection of Elderly since 1998. This programme was a major plan of policies and actions, which are consistent with strategic guidelines of the International Macao Strategy on Ageing adopted in 1995. One of the key documents which aims to ensure the rights of the elder population is the National Strategy on Ageing approved in 2009.

Question 3: Please provide information on existing legislation, policies and programmes to address discrimination against older persons, including measures to address multiple discrimination (e.g. discrimination based on age and gender).

Considering the situation that women who are household heads, divorced, separated, never married or widowed are comparatively vulnerable to poverty, the government is trying to take special social protection measures focused on women, particularly on older women. One of the main principles that should be observed during the implementation of the National Strategy on Ageing is to take into account the diverse needs and interests of older people regardless their age, gender, ethnicity and health status. The Strategy has a provision to create a favourable atmosphere for employment and eliminate conditions such as age discrimination in employment with aim to promote employment for older population.

Question 4: Please provide information on existing legislation, policies and programmes to address violence and abuse against older persons in the private and public spheres.

It is widespread that elderly people are increasingly being affected by alcoholism, crimes and violence, which continue to be evident due to social problems such as unemployment and poverty. A survey conducted by the National Center Against Violence in 2003 revealed that every third aged person is affected by domestic violence one way or another. Therefore, the government has been working with law enforcement agencies and NGOs in order to ensure peace and security for its citizens. For instance, over 3000-5000 USD have been allocated each year to support activities of the shelters for child and women victims of violence. Victims of violence, who are protected by the shelter are provided with legal and psychological counseling, as well as with free medical and other services. It is important to note that considerable part of the violence victims in the shelter are elderly people aged above 60. However, the services provided to the shelter victims are not adequate based on capacity of the shelter and funding provided. Hence, there is a need for increased government support and improved partnership with international organizations concerning this issue.

Question 5: Please provide information on existing legislation, policies and programmes addressing old age-sensitive services and facilities, such as those related to mobility, age-adequate design, long-term care, primary health care and adult and continuous education.

Housing: The Government of Mongolia is initiating a number of measures in order to improve housing conditions of its population. Particularly, it pursues policies to provide civil servants, elderly and the population with middle income with affordable housing by reflecting in its Action Plan provision of "40 thousand of housing units". A number of measures have been undertaken regarding issue of bonds from the state budget for housing finance and mobilization of resources required with the support of other countries and international organizations.

Issues related to providing elderly with soft loans and other supports in order to enable them to improve their housing conditions and constructing their own houses have been legalized. In 2004, 200 households were provided with free housing in the frame of actions to provide the poor elderly and war veterans, who have been fighting for the independence of our country, whereas over 1600 war veterans have been provided with free one-bedroom apartments in 2009-2011.

Moreover, provision of population with traditional *ger* housing is an important part of housing policy of our country. Particularly, citizens with low income, peripheral city population and rural population

mainly live in *ger* housing. The cost of *ger* housing is comparatively reasonable, and therefore, it is very common in our country to give *gers* to elderly and citizens living in difficult circumstances as present. This kind of measures involves over 10 thousands of households annually.

Infrastructure: In order to improve opportunities for the elderly to participate in social life, they were entitled to travel by the public transport for free. In order words, state owned public transport companies have been contracted and serve elderly, disabled people and students with concession or for free and the state reimburses for the services provided. However, some elderly and disabled people still face some difficulties as the provision of vehicles of the contracted state owned companies is not sufficient and private transport companies do not provide services for free. Therefore, there is a need to create favourable conditions and services for the elderly and disabled people through cooperation with private companies by offering reimbursements for the services provided by mini buses or grant them allowances for the public transports on top of their pensions and benefits.

Moreover, efforts have been made to change road constructions and design to enable the elderly and disabled people to travel with comfort on the streets. Measures aimed at equipping pedestrians of the busy roads with sound signals and establishing special pathways for people with wheelchairs and blind people. However, all organizations need to work with initiatives and equip all the new constructions accordingly.

Social services: There have been significant efforts to develop community based services for the vulnerable social groups of population, including elderly and people with disabilities and to prepare specialized social workers who will provide these services. It is anticipated that preparation of health social workers will have positive impact on improvement of quality and availability of care and services for the elderly population with disabilities.

At present, those elderly, who have no caregivers or whom it is not possible to care, are being cared in the residential care centers, whereas, the others, who requires short-term welfare services for health and other reasons, are getting services of the welfare centers. There are 6 residential care centers for the elderly and one for disabled people are operating at the national level. Moreover, all provinces and district have got set up Cabinets for Elderly, where elderly spend their free time by organizing various trainings and communication activities, related expenses of which are funded by the local administrations.

However, there is a need for reconsideration of the services provided for the elderly and disabled population through the residential care centers and welfare offices to make it more client friendly and community based.

In this regard, the Law on Social Welfare has been revised in 2005, legalizing development and improvement of community based social services. Currently, standardization of community based care and welfare services for the elderly is being formulated in order to ensure implementation of the Law. By standardizing the services, performances of the welfare and care service will get improved with particular focus on development of friendly and modern services for the elderly suitable for their specific needs and health conditions.

Health services: Provided by the Citizens Health Insurance Law of Mongolia the state is responsible for the health insurance contribution of citizens who have no other source of income apart from

pension and reimburse expenses related to hospitalization of them in state hospitals from the health insurance fund.

Health protection issues of elderly are being legalized in the national laws and regulations, policies and programmes of Mongolia. By 2015 the number of elderly covered by rehabilitation treatment and services will be increased by 60 percent and 80 percent of population aged over 60 and their family members will have knowledge and awareness about chronic diseases and prevention from becoming disabled in old age.

The National Center for Gerontology under the Ministry of Health is responsible for the implementation of the programme and its main functions include provision of services for the elderly, conducting trainings and communication activities aimed at behavioral change, provision of health care centers with professional and methodological guidance about community based rehabilitation services for the elderly and improvement of health care quality and accessibility.

Question 6: Please provide information on existing legislation, policies and programmes concerning social protection measures as well as right to work and right to social security with regard to older persons.

Social insurance: According to the Law on Social Insurance, males aged 60 and females aged 55 are entitled for old age pension. As provided by the law, elderly people are entitled to get pension, which directly depend on their wages during their employment period, as well as they are provided with opportunities to benefit from the social welfare fund in the form of assistances and concession services, which facilitate the elderly to live above the poverty line.

Currently, over 300,000 person are receiving pension and benefits from the State pension system and nearly 70 percent of them get old age pension. Furthermore, above 65 percent of the beneficiaries of the old age pension are aged 60 and above and two third of them are women in terms of gender. Provided by the Law on Social Insurance, social insurance fund is produced by the contribution by the employees, who pay 10.0 percent of their wages or equivalent incomes and the contribution by the employers, who pay 11.0-13.0 percent. The monthly pension is defined in consistency with wage level at the time of retirement.

Prior to 1990, everyone was involved in employment, and hence, over 80 percent of the aged population are currently covered by the state pension system as provided by the laws and regulations. This illustrates that the social protection system is generally well developed despite the present level of old age pension is not sufficient enough to provide needs of aged population fully. However the pension is increasing relatively.

Despite relative improvements in economic situation of the country and noticeable increase in old age pension, the comparative increases in wages and pension are still negligible than the increases in the prices, which have its root in the beginning of the transition.

Social welfare: The Government's policy aims to expand welfare services for the vulnerable groups of elderly. As provided by the Law on Social welfare, elderly people are entitled to 13 kinds of concessions including price discounts for the fuel in winter, equipments for the artificial organs and compensation for the sanatorium expenses.

However, the centralized forms of care services for the vulnerable are still in place in our country. In this period of economic hardship, these services do not produce considerable outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial to develop community based care and welfare services for the elderly. In this regard, we need to undertake measures to change social psychology, privatize residential care centers, ensure participation of NGOs and private sectors, prepare social workers and learn experiences of countries where market economy has developed successfully for many years.

Welfare pension is provided in a form of social security measure those poor or lone aged, who had not worked previously or who are not eligible to receive old age pension from the social insurance fund from the social welfare fund. Another main form of social security assistances provided by the state for the vulnerable population is social welfare benefits. As provided by the revised Law on Social Welfare, extreme poor elderly or citizens, who care elderly or disabled with bedridden diseases, are entitled to receive conditional cash allowances. Future policies aim to increase the types of assistances and improve eligibility criterias and measures to develop relevant service standards and research efforts are underway.

Furthermore, Mongolia has launched some reforms in its social security system. Particularly, it is agreed that the welfare system needs a reform, the purpose of which is to shift from inactive cash benefits, which promote passiveness among poor, to community based welfare services, which also consistent with policies aimed at income generation through employment promotion and poverty reduction.

The Government is planning to undertake measures to identify the foremost needs of the vulnerable citizens and address them accordingly in cooperation with the local authorities, social protection institutions, NGO and civil society. This does not imply reduction in the amount or varieties of welfare cash assistances provided for the older population and other focus groups of population, but aims to form social attitude to free citizens to accept poverty and live in it in longer term.

Employment: As provided by the Constitution and the Labour Code, aged population are entitled to get engaged in employment, thus increase their income. For example, there are provisions of laws, which prohibit to limit wages of aged workers, who receive pensions, let the employers to reduce work hours of aged workers based on their requests and transfer them to a position, which has no harm to health of aged workers, as well as dedicate up to 0.3 percent of the total wage fund of the organization to development of aged population and improvement of their social protection.

Furthermore, according to the Law on Civil Service, qualified civil servants of pension age are allowed to continue to work up to 5 years based on the organization's request. However, state and private organizations are still reluctant to employ aged people. Presently, only 12.0 percent of the pensioners are engaged in employment.

Mongolia's rural area is quite specific as economic activity is widespread not only in total population, but also among aged population. Aged people have opportunity to get involved in agricultural activities, particularly in cattle breeding. Conversely, the situation is different in urban settlements and there is a limited possibility to get engaged in employment for elderly people.

Question 7: Please provide information on existing legislation, policies and programmes to systematically collect, update and analyze information disaggregated by age.

The National Strategy on Ageing recognizes the importance of strengthened capacity of public officers in all levels to reflect population age structure changes, trends, and ageing in planning and policy activities. It has put forward an aim to conduct surveys on older people and ageing issues, improve access, availability, quality and utilization of data.

Currently, every year the National Statistical Committee of Mongolia issues statistical yearbook and provides some basic statistics disaggregated by age and sex. However, we still lack of many important statistics disaggregated by age and sex, which required for policies and programmes.