

From: International Longevity Centre Global Alliance
April 16, 2019

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the International Longevity Centre Global Alliance about the topic of and social security.

Social protection measures are designed to ensure economic security and to protect people—of all ages-- against social and economic shocks, poverty and deprivation.

While many countries have established social protection schemes, much of the world's older population remains highly vulnerable to poverty.

Older age can be full of shocks: an injury or illness, an environmental crisis, widowhood or the loss of one's adult children can be the tipping point for homelessness, institutionalization and deprivation.

The absence or inadequacy of social protection measures to mitigate these shocks and ensure a dignified standard of living are symptoms of discrimination and inequality, and a denial of the rights of older persons.

The evidence is clear. Old age pensions are affordable, even in low-income countries. They can pull older persons and indeed, their families out of

poverty. The devil of course is in the details and the implementation.

Even when social pensions are available, they are too often inadequate or inaccessible.

Most social protection schemes fail to take gender and intersectionality into account.

Most social pension schemes fail to recognize the rising costs of living, particularly of housing and medicines.

If we are to eliminate poverty among older people and ensure they have the resources and benefits they need, we must provide adequate social protection schemes that are not dependent on the time you have spent in formal work, that financially recognize the work of caregiving, and that are part of a bundle of social protection programs that include access to universal, age-friendly healthcare and pharmaceuticals, lifelong learning and age-friendly affordable housing.

The Open Ended Working Group on Aging has been diligently working at this for 9 years. At the last meeting, my own country said they were open to the idea of a Convention

Why is this taking so long?

We need a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons that clearly addresses these issues and provides an accountability mechanism that ensures effective implementation.

We need a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. And we need it now!