

## **NGEC ATTENDS THE 10<sup>TH</sup> WORKING SESSION OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON AGEING, 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> April 2019, UN HQ, NEW YORK**

### **Introduction**

The Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Ageing took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York between 15<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> April, 2019. The Commission was represented by Commissioners: Dr. Joyce Mutinda (Chairperson), Dr. Muriithi Chomba (Vice-Chairperson) and Dr. Florence Wachira. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection led the delegation which also included NSSF officials. The key Focus areas on the agenda included: **Education, Training, life-long Learning and Capacity building** and **Social Protection and Social Security (including Social Protection floors)**

Some of the key issues arising from deliberations included that the Population of the ageing population is growing. Globally, by the year 2020, it will be more than 1.4 Billion and will probably overtake that of the youth. There is therefore need to ensure that issues of ageing population are mainstreamed into broader socio-economic development of every country. Older persons are a resource that governments should invest in. They should not be viewed as an expense/ burden but rather there is need to recognize value and contribution of older persons and the crucial roles they play in families and community.

In the spirit of '**leaving on-one behind**' (SDGs), there is need to integrate the ageing in the broad development agenda through adoption of Rights based approaches. Gender parity, inclusion and recognition that older persons are not homogeneous is important and therefore the need to appreciate diversity in catering for their needs. There is need to involve older persons in decisions on matters affecting them. Delegates called for a global instrument to be developed on the rights of older persons that sets Inter-national Human Rights standards for the ageing and opportunities to exchange best practices in order to improve the welfare of older persons globally.

On **Education, Training and life-long learning** and capacity building, the main issues that were discussed included: That the right to education is grounded in International human rights laws. The ageing have a right to access education and long life learning both formal and informal including regular university courses. There is need to change mindsets that 'education is for children and the youth only'. The ageing need long life education for enhanced social integration. Academic curricular should be adapted to cater for older learners to pursue their aspirations in education. Older persons learn differently and have different expectations. They should be equipped with skills to allow them to work as long as they wish and are able to and should be enabled to access technology and vocational training just like everyone else

On **Social Protection and social security** (including Social Protection floors), the issues arising from discussions included: that Social protection is a Human Right. Rights do not change with age and therefore the ageing person should continue enjoying access to justice and social equality. Ombudsmen in countries should defend the rights of older persons. There is need to create a society of 'all ages' that ensures security and dignity of the ageing. There is need to strengthen the social image of older persons and Governments should recognize and protect the rights of older persons especially from violence, discrimination and neglect. There is also There is need for a change in attitudes on ageing-Governments should design innovative policies and services and to remove structural and institutional discrimination and stereotypes on ageing in order to foster intergenerational partnerships and solidarity. Governments should recognize that Safety nets and cash transfers are not sustainable. There is need to establish pensions and social protection measures that are protected by law so there is entitlement rights for the older persons. Adequate pensions should be provided to cater for health and social needs of the ageing; there is need to increase numbers of health workers specialized in care of the ageing.

**Compiled by Dr. Florence Wachira, MBS - Commissioner**