



***“Rights and Active Engagement  
in Society and Development”***

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# Society for All

- The World Summit for Social Development (1995) put people at the center of development.
  - That meant *all* people, not some of the people
- Older people – those aged 60 and over numbered 606 million worldwide, with 60 percent of them living in developing countries – are part and parcel of society.
- A *society for all* encompasses the goal of providing all social groups with an opportunity to contribute to the society
- The rights of older persons as members of society are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights



# **Inclusion in the context of human rights**

- “Everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status”  
(Article 2)



# Human Rights are indivisible

- Human rights are moral and political claims made on the basis of our common humanity
- Human rights empower the individual and the community by placing their rights at the center of development processes
- UN Charter is legally binding on all state parties, reaffirming faith in fundamental human rights
- Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 stipulated that “*all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated*”.
- The special status attached to the language of human rights gives a universal moral authority to social claims that would otherwise rest on a value judgment



# Social Vulnerability

- Social vulnerability is a complex phenomenon with its causes rooted in social, economic and cultural institutions and practices. It can be seen as *a state of high exposure to certain risks and uncertainties*, in combination with *a reduced ability to defend oneself against those risks and cope with their negative consequences*
- Older persons suffer from a vicious circle: non-participation – powerlessness – social and economic deprivation – vulnerability
- Reduction of vulnerabilities, including those of older persons, is a crucial element in a fight against poverty
- Tension often develops between vulnerability and a quest for independence, when an independence of older persons is at odds with an emerging need for care and reliance on others



# Social Vulnerability of Older Persons

- Older persons are vulnerable, even though they are not *inherently* vulnerable
- The ageing process can force people to adjust to physical, social and economic circumstances over which they may have little control
- Older persons' vulnerabilities can be significantly reduced through a combination of their own defenses built up over a life-time and the presence of outside sources of support



# Reducing Social Vulnerability

- The need for internal **consistency**: an integration of social and economic policy is a necessity to alleviate the impact of vulnerabilities on affected individuals, households, communities and social groups
- **Focus and priorities** are necessary for policies to be effective, particularly in the face of limited public sector resources
- This approach requires the development of **new and effective ways** to coordinate the delivery of social and economic policies



# Capacity Building

- Building the national capacities for human rights including human rights of older persons is crucial for reducing vulnerability
- Human rights cannot be realized in the absence of effective and accountable institutions
- Role of education in empowering citizens





# Rights based approach

- Rights based approach to work with older people is based on the belief that human rights, economic development and social justice are all interlinked
- Stresses the need for equality, liberty and empowerment
- Places older people first, viewing them as key actors in their own development rather than as passive recipients of welfare
- Recognizes the inherent dignity of older persons and considers participations as both a ‘means’ and an ‘end’



# Advantages of rights based approach

- Preventive
  - keeps to reduce vulnerability
- Inclusive
  - upholds the principles of equality and equity and provides a framework that includes all people
- Encompassing
  - provides a framework for developing a multi-sectoral approach to development



# Entitlements and Conflicting Priorities

- The entitlements can be established through an accountable and democratic process.
- The entitlements can be provided on a sustainable basis without damaging the state's capacity to respond to other priorities.



# Challenging the discrimination of older persons

- Crucial role of participatory approaches: all the people have a right to be involved in issues affecting them
- Their voices need to be heard
- Programs for older people should not be limited only to them and intergenerational support for older people should be encouraged
- Older people have a right to participate in development programs, including poverty reduction programs



# “Bottom-up” approach

- The “bottom-up” approach is defined as an open-ended **participatory process** that seeks to incorporate and link local and national activities to UN regional and intergovernmental bodies and up to the global level of review and appraisal
- Closely linked to empowerment
- The central idea of the “bottom-up” approach is to allow the traditional intergovernmental deliberative process to benefit from a sound and carefully considered narrative assessment of whether or not the *Madrid Plan’s* objectives are being achieved at local national, sub-regional and regional levels



# Modalities

- A number of modalities may be considered which involve a participatory approach. These entail an open-ended dialogue and sharing of ideas, meetings, collection of data and best practices. Various stakeholders - at local levels in as well as outside Governments and in partnership and coordination with national actors – are expected to take part.
- The key is to ensure that the review and appraisal of the implementation of the *MIPA* appropriately utilizes the experiences, the expertise and the resources of all stakeholders at the national and local levels
- The regional support to review is crucial: provides a strategic advantage in assessing the progress of implementation by service as a bridge between national and global considerations.



# Key Challenges

- Poverty remains a key impediment to human rights progress and to the creation of the inclusive society for all ages
- Full and equal participation of all the persons, in particular older women, in decision making at all levels remains elusive
- Empowering the disadvantaged and protecting the vulnerable are vital for combating the discrimination based on age