

NGO Submission for the Second Universal Periodic Review of Nepal in 2015

Submitted by HelpAge International Nepal, March 2015

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Introduction

1. This submission highlights and makes recommendations on the inadequate provision of social security for older people in Nepal and continued barriers to their enjoyment of their right to health.

The right to social security

2. Barriers to older people's enjoyment of right to social security remain. According to the Senior Citizen Policy and Working Policy - 2058 BS (2002 AD) "*Allowances shall be provided in an appropriate way to the senior citizens economically weak and socially insecure. Considerations shall be made to provide other facilities.*"

3. Nonetheless 13% of eligible respondents in a 2012 HelpAge International Nepal¹ survey were not aware of their eligibility and therefore were deprived of their Old Age Allowance, Widows Allowance or Health Allowance. A later end-project survey² compiled by the same agencies in mid-2013 showed that on average, one-fifth of the surveyed population of 4639 Older People above 70 years of age (the starting age for the Old Age Allowance, or the OAA) were still deprived of their due allowances. The picture was far bleaker in three of the ten urban-based districts, who reported a lower accessibility rate to the OAA than the average of all ten districts, with Kathmandu at 28%, Bhaktapur at 25% and Kaski at 21% respectively.

4. A further barrier to older people's enjoyment of their right to social security is their lack of identity cards which are required to prove eligibility for various social security benefits, for public transportation subsidiaries necessary to travel to collect benefits and to health services. Article 25 of the Act Relating to Senior Citizens 2006 stipulates that the Government must provide older people with such an identity card. However, many older people have not been provided with one and therefore cannot claim the various facilities and concessions they are entitled to.

5. In its Concluding Observations to the Government of Nepal in December 2014 (E/C.12/NPL/CO/3), the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that the Government "*undertake all necessary measures to comply with its commitment to extend social security to workers in the informal economy, in particular regarding maternity*

¹ Door to Door Baseline Survey conducted by *HelpAge International Nepal, the Nepal Participatory Action Network (NEPAN) and Women for Human Rights: Single Women's Group (WHR)* in November 2012

² Final end-line Older Citizen's Monitoring project survey covered 4639 Older People above 70 years of age in ten project districts, and was undertaken by HelpAge, NEPAN and WHR in mid-2013.

and old age” and that it “assess the possibility of establishing a social protection floor, in line with the ILO Recommendation No.202 (2012)” (paragraph 15 b).

6. Recommendation: We recommend that the Government of Nepal take all necessary measures to establish a sustainable universal social protection floor in line with ILO Recommendation No.202 (2012) and puts into practice a consistent monitoring and implementation plan for its social protection programmes.

The right to the highest attainable standard of health

7. According to the Senior Citizen Policy and Working Policy - 2058 BS (2002 AD), *Free medicinal treatment and services shall be provided to those senior citizens who want to have medical treatment in general bed or outdoor service in government hospitals and health centers.*

8. Despite this older people face significant challenges to their right to access health services since the majority of existing health facilities, including those hospitals that have established geriatric wards, do not have health personnel who are trained in geriatric medicine or in care for different forms of dementia, including Alzheimer’s disease.

9. Healthcare is also unaffordable for many older people. Despite the annual provision of NRS 2,000 (around 20 USD) for health expenses borne by older people in government hospitals, concerns remain about the lack of awareness amongst older people about this provision and how accessible it will be in practice.

10. 58% of the total 27, 279 OP respondents from the November survey reported that poor health infrastructure/services was a major deterrent in older people seeking proper health care. 72% stated that they still had to pay for their health care, and 74% said that they still paid for their medicines. 68% stated that they were not even aware of the Government of Nepal’s health care fund and just 3% stated that they took the time to access the health care funds/allowance.³

11. In its Concluding Observations to the Government of Nepal in December 2014 (E/C.12/NPL/CO/3), the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed their concern that older persons are not entitled to universal health care and recommended that the Government “*ensure that older persons are entitle to universal health care and access to affordable health care services*” and to “*disseminate information on the annual provision of Nr. 2,000 per persons to help cover the health-related expenses of older persons in government hospitals*”(paragraph 27).

12. Recommendation: We recommend that the Government of Nepal take all necessary measures to ensure that older persons are entitled to universal health care and have access to affordable health care services, including access to appropriate information about the entitlements available to them.

³ See footnote 1.

For further information contact:

Pradesh Khaling Rai
Senior Officer
Fundraising, Advocacy and Communication
HelpAge International Nepal
PO Box 21299, Lalitpur
Jawalakhel, behind Standard Chartered Bank
Kathmandu, Nepal
T: +(977) 1 555 3589, 555 1388, 5524 038 (Ext. 105)
F: +(977) 1 5545 623
Cell: + (977) 980 851 4227, 98035 20312
Email: pradesh.rai@helpagesa.org
info.np@helpagesa.org