

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON AGEING

11-13 SEPTEMBER 2006

**PALAIS DE CONGRES,
YAOUNDÉ, CAMEROON**

YAOUNDÉ CALL FOR ACTION

This Call for Action emanates from an Africa Regional Workshop held from 11th to 13th September 2006 in Yaoundé, Cameroon under the patronage of the Prime Minister, Head of Government. The workshop brought together 103 participants from 12 countries which included Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Africa, Sudan, Ghana, Lesotho, Cameroon, United Kingdom and Zimbabwe. The participants included AU representatives, senior government officials, HelpAge International Affiliates and representatives of UN agencies and collaborating NGOs. The conference was co-organized by HelpAge International, Regional Centre for the Welfare of Older People in Cameroon (RECEWAPEC) and the Government of Cameroon, with support from the African Union.

The workshop was officially opened by the Minister for Social Affairs, Madame Catherine Bakang Mbock. In her speech, the minister noted the social and economic changes that have made older people increasingly vulnerable and also noted the rapid increase in the numbers and proportion of older people in populations in Africa. The minister underlined the urgent need for policy responses to issues of older people.

Of particular concern to delegates in the meeting is the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS and the burden of care and support for orphans and PLWAS that older people continue to bear, often without recognition and support. Delegates underlined the importance of policies that protect and nurture the rights of older people and recognition of their roles and contributions. They also called for the various departments, ministries, development partners and the civil society to coordinate support for older people.

The conference noted:

- Following the AU plan of Action and the Madrid Conference in 2002, Governments and civil society organisations are increasingly aware of the need to address issues of ageing in their respective countries.
- Civil society organisations, especially NGOs have made substantial contributions to the improvement of the conditions of older people
- The deplorable situation of older people, especially women, in relation to poverty, abuse, access to healthcare and access to property
- The unrecognised role of older people, especially older women, as caregivers.
- The absence of social protection measures to protect older people in their advance age, especially those without access to formal social pensions
- Inadequate recognition of the needs and conditions of the poor, disabled, critically ill older people and those outside the formal social insurance covers.
- The lack of sensitisation on ageing and the need for support for ageing policies which will in the future affect them.
- There is urgency to strengthen access to healthcare for older people especially those living in the rural areas
- Home based care is increasingly important in providing care yet remains unrecognised and unsupported

Delegates called for

- National HIV/AIDS policies must address the issues of older care-givers of PLWAS and OVC and support to them in this critical role.
- Inclusion of older people in HIV/AIDS information and programmes (prevention, C&S, stigma etc) with particular focus on appropriate and relevant messages for older people
- Encourage VCT among older people
- Increase access to ARTs and treatment for opportunistic infections equitably in urban and rural areas
- Studies, data and information on the impact of HIV/AIDS and social protection measures on older people be undertaken and be disaggregated by age and gender
- Implement the LCA and adopt comprehensive social protection schemes for older people with particular emphasis on universal social pensions.
- Coordinate social protection measures being implemented with various ministries through a comprehensive national coordination framework
- Increase access to healthcare for older people by eliminating user fees and integrating traditional health practice within national healthcare frameworks.
- Include training on ageing in curriculum of all health and social workers
- Disseminate information on existing policies and laws that protect the rights of older people
- Disseminate and raise awareness of the AU-POA and MIPAA at national and regional levels.
- Urgently develop national policies on ageing in collaboration with older people, civil society and other stakeholders
- Mainstream ageing and the concerns of older persons in national development plans and poverty alleviation strategies.
- Establish an advisory council on ageing in AU with mandate to mobilise resources for adoption of POAs at national, regional and international level.
- Identify lead national coordinating agency on ageing
- Establish a department on ageing within the UN system
- Mobilise resources at national levels towards and equitable allocation towards issues of older people.
- Carry out a bi-annual review to assess progress on the Call for Action made in Yaoundé under the auspices of the AU.

13 September 2006