

Q1. The role of my organization is in total response to the MIPAA implementation frame work for the rights and well-being of older persons. Though we have not been able to achieve too much for older persons, all our activities fall within the MIPAA implementation.

We advocate the rights and well-being of older persons through articles, public functions, breakfast meeting, health screening exercise and provision of medicine, food, water, clothing, volunteer services and participation of World Elderly Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), International Day for Older People and Senior Citizen's Day Celebrations. During these functions, we draw the attention of the government to make concrete policies to highlight the rights and well-being of older persons.

We are planning to register some 2,000 older persons in five constituencies with the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and also establish a recreational center for older persons. We also intend to undertake agricultural projects to alleviate poverty from among older persons.

Q2. My country's ageing policies are all enshrined in the MIPAA implementation frame work. The government has started implementation of some of the policies in the area of health, poverty alleviation and transport.

a. Health

The government has started with the free registration of older person with the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) so far about 5,000 older persons have been registered within this exercise in accordance of with the MIPAA policy on the rights of older persons to health, according to Chpt 4:4 policies and strategies that talk about improving Health and Nutrition and Well-Being of Older Persons and MIPAA Priority Direction on Advance Health and well-being into old age.

b. Poverty Alleviation

In order to alleviate poverty from among older persons, the government has introduced LEAP, that is, Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty. Through this exercise some older persons have been given some finances to support of them as a way of reducing the propotion of older persons living in extreme poverty by one half by 2015. This is a good start. There are still many older persons who have not been reached in the exercise, I still hope as the exercise continues, the unreached would be reached.

c. Transportation

On transportation, the government has started negotiating with both the public and private transport agencies to reduce their fares by 50% for older persons to enable them board vehicles with ease. The government recently introduced an exercise known as "Eban". (Elderly Welfare Card In this exercise older person would be given priority when they go to the bank, hospital, transport station to board buses, etc.

Q3. Older women have suffered in so many ways from society. Most of them have been accused of witchcraft. In the northern part of my country some older women were chased out of their homes and sent to some places they called "Witches Camps". Some of them were even chased by their own family members. These poor older women stayed in these camps for a long time until recently these camps were closed down by the government. And these poor older women were intergrated into society.

Q4. I am not all that sure older persons have been informed about MIPAA. If they have been informed at all, then it would only be a handful of older persons.

Q5. In Ghana women are less privileged in so many areas. But today due to the UN policy on human rights, woman have started to come to the lime light. In terms of equality and non-discrimination of older persons, I think since the campaign for the rights of older person has not travelled much in the country the impact of MIPAA implementation is less.

Since the government and some non-governmental organizations are creating awareness on the rights of older persons. Some older persons have realized they have to stand for their rights.

Q6. Since the government and the other organizations started to create awareness on the rights of older persons in fulfillment of the MIPAA implementation, society have started to add the older persons issues to their programmes. July 1st is dedicated to senior citizens, other older persons advocacy organization, such as mine, also do some activities to address the issues about the rights and wellbeing of older persons. Though the impact is not much felt, I am sure by and by, the impact would be great.

Q7. Some examples of best practices from a human rights perspective are in the area where older women get shares in the property when their husbands die.

And again, older women are rescued from the accusations of being witches. The reasons being that, sometime past in Ghana, if a woman's husband dies, she is expelled from her matrimonial home, after the funeral the heir takes ownership of the dead man's property and the poor old woman is driven away together with her children, if they had any. They are accused of killing the husband. But now, I can say through awareness creation and education these practices have been reduced by at least 70%.

The second being that people use to think all older women are witches, thus causing older women to become public ridicule. But now people have come to understand that even some children are witches, so people have ceased calling older women witches. Some families that neglected their aged have started taking care of them through sensitization on days like the "Mother's and Father's Days celebrations.

Q8. Most of the main challenges my country faces are, some traditions, cultures and beliefs that have been in existence for quite a long time that were laid down by some ancestors. These have caused great fear into society that people think they might die should they abolish them.

Another major challenge is lack of funding. The Ghana Ageing policy was published in July, 2010, but due to lack of funding, the government has not been able to implement all the policies. NGOS also face similar challenge. I believe if funds were made available, both the government and NGOS could implement more of the ageing policies.

Thank you.

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