

WORKSHOP ON HEALTH, WELLBEING AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum) India, March 5 – 7, 2012

The context

There is a general feeling that older persons receive low priority in allocations on health and social welfare budget whether at the family level or at the national level and that this is more so about most of the developing countries. At the family level, the huge cost of old age healthcare and the chronic nature of most old age diseases would make the medical management of the old quite taxing to families. At the national level, geriatric hospitals and geriatric care in these countries are meager and very poorly planned (again a question of priority). In the Asia Pacific region, more than one-third of the population is rural and lives below poverty line. Most workers are in unorganized sectors and do not have adequate social security coverage for old age. These would impinge on the amount of rights that a person could otherwise enjoy in availing the benefits of good health and social security. Even when facilities are available for the general population, the old may not have equal access to them unless special programmes exist for them. In any case these have to be examined for their availability, adequacy and affordability for the old to ensure the rights of the old in this sphere. The workshop is intended to examine these points and to attempt at ensuring their rights to health and wellbeing, if necessary, by suggesting additional measures.

About the Workshop

The Workshop will enquire into the availability and use of health care and social support systems for Older Persons in the Asia Pacific Region and the opportunities for them to avail these. These will then be related to human rights as health and wellbeing are a prerequisite to the enjoyment of any right. As a matter of fact, human rights would cover the whole range of a citizen's entitlements in a free state and, in this, health and wellbeing is basic. Accordingly, this workshop will attempt to find out the extent to which the rights of older persons to health care and wellbeing have been provided for and adequately used. While there is lack of clarity on what are the human rights relating to health and wellbeing and how they can be implemented, there is good clarity on (1) what health and welfare facilities are available in a country?, (2) to what extent are the citizens able to avail them?, and (3) are there restrictions on their use based on age, gender, disability and other considerations? The findings of these enquiries could throw light on the level of empowerment of the population in terms of the right to good health and social support. The workshop will examine the state of the art in healthcare and social support systems in the different countries of the region in terms of the various programmes in these fields, their accessibility, adequacy, affordability and actual use by the older persons, areas of gap and attempted ways of filling them by the different countries. To the extent possible, a common minimum set of measures in healthcare and social support will be attempted for adoption by the member countries represented in the Workshop. In this context, the problems and needs of the different segments of the older population in these two major areas will be examined, based on their age, sex, marital status, disability, ethnic and other enabling and disabling factors to ensure that even when these facilities are provided, they are maximally used by all the older persons.

Accordingly, the present workshop will discuss the level of empowerment of the old in terms of the amount of health care and social support available and accessed by the old in these countries. The workshop will enable the delegates from the different countries to get an opportunity to know where they stand vis-a-vis one another on these matters and the best practices that some countries would be reporting. The collective wisdom of the delegates would also generate ways and means of evolving a minimum programme for empowerment of the old in these areas.

The Issues

The above issues will be discussed and debated through the following sub themes:

- (1) Health care facilities available and accessible, extent of their use and gaps felt. These will be examined through an analysis of the health care system in each country.
- (2) Social security and support in terms of old age pension, living arrangements, family care, kinship bond, protective and abuse-prevention measures, etc.
- (3) Legislations, programmes and other provisions in these fields
- (4) Gaps in health security and social security
- (5) Formulation of some basic programmes in the light of the above.

Venue and dates

The workshop will be held in Thiruvananthapuram (formerly Trivandrum), capital of the Indian State of Kerala, on March 5 – 7, 2012

Participants

The workshop expects and invites the following types of delegates

- (1) Officials from national Human Rights Commissions in the countries of the region
- (2) Leaders from NGOs working for human rights in the region
- (3) Officials and non officials dealing with health and social security programmes in the countries of the region
- (4) Scholars in the field of human rights, health care, social security and related fields.

The total number of participants will be limited to 100.

Call for papers

While the workshop is intended mainly for functionaries working in the fields of healthcare, social care and human rights, a certain number of scholars in these fields also will be accepted to make the workshop more broad based. Scholars who feel they can contribute critical inputs to the workshop may contact the Workshop Coordinator for this purpose as early as possible since the number of such participants will have to be limited.

Registration

All workshop participants have to register. While there is no registration fee for overseas participants, others will be requested to pay a nominal amount of Rs.250/- as Registration Fee to cover the processing expenses. All Registered participants will be provided local hospitality (accommodation, food and local transport). **Registration will close on December 31, 2011.** Since we have limited the total number of delegates to 100, those who are interested are advised to register early. There is no Registration Form but in your enquiries you should give your full address and the title and brief abstract (200 words) of your proposed presentation. Registration fee (if required) will be collected after accepting the abstract.

For further information, please contact

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