

Government of the Federal
Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

National Plan of Action
on older persons
(1998 - 2007)E.C

Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

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Objectives of the Plan of Action

- ✓ Expand and strengthen services for the older persons based on community participation.
- ✓ Encourage the participation of older persons to make use of their accumulated knowledge and rich experience in bridging about development.
- ✓ Give attention to the rights and needs of older persons to make them part of the country's development plans and poverty reduction strategy.
- ✓ Identify the issues of older persons and work on them by listing specific objectives and activities.
- ✓ Co-ordinate concerned government and non-government organizations so as to enable them contribute their participation in realizing the objectives of the plan of action.
- ✓ Facilitate conditions to link the issues of Ethiopian older persons with international efforts to eventually gain cooperation and support.

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ACRONYMS

AIDS	Human Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
AUPFPAOP	African Union Policy Frame and Plan of Action on Older Persons
BMI	Body Mass Index
BOLSA	Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs
BPR	Business Processing Reengineering
CSA	Central Statistical Authority
CSRП	Civil Service Reform program
DSWP	Developmental Social Welfare Policy
GO	Government Organization
HIV	Human Immunity Virus
HIV/AIDS	HIV/AIDS Sectariat
IDOP	International Day of Older Persons
ILO	International Labor Organization
IM	Implementation Manual
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MIPAOP	Madrid International Plan of Action on Older Persons
MOLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
NGO	Non Governmental Organizations
NTF	National Task Force
OP	Older Persons
OVC	Orphan and Vulnerable Children
UNDC/HIV/AIDS	United Nations Declaration of Commitments on HIV/AIDS

Table of Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	<i>Page</i>
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1. General situation of older persons-----	4
1.2. Need for the plan of action -----	7
1.3. Objectives the plan of action -----	7
Chapter 2. Priority Direction of the Plan of Action	9
2.1. Developmental aspect of ageing -----	10
2.2. Humanitarian aspect of ageing -----	10
Chapter 3. Overall Strategies of the Plan of Action Plan	
3.1. Research -----	13
3.2. Data collection-----	14
3.3. Advocacy and Awareness Raising -----	15
3.4. Implementation Capacity-----	16
3.5. Co-ordination -----	17
3.6. Monitoring and Evaluation-----	18
Chapter 4. National Plan of Action on Older Persons /1998-2007/	
Key issues and activities	19
4.1. Issue No. 1. Health and well-being-----	19
4.2. Issue No. 2. Family and community care-----	24
4.3. Issue No. 3. Rights-----	27
4.4. Issue No. 4. Housing and living environment --	30
4.5. Issue No. 5. Social security -----	34
4.6. Issue No. 6. Education and Training-----	37
4.7. Issue No. 7. Employment and Income Generation--	40

4.8. Issue No. 8. Poverty Reduction-----	44
4.9. Issue No. 9. HIV/AIDS -----	48
4.10. Issue No. 10. Gender and older persons-----	53
4.11. Issue No. 11. Food and Nutrition.-----	56
4.12. Issue No. 12. Emergencies -----	59
4.13. Issue No. 13. Protection of life and property-	63

Chapter 5. Implementation -----	65
5.1. Federal Level -----	66
5.2. Regional Level-----	67
5.3. Reporting, Monitoring and evaluation -----	69
5.4. Tasks of the implementing committees.-----	69
5.5. Functions and responsibilities of technical committees.-----	70

FOREWORD

This National Plan of Action on older persons /1998 - 2007 E.C/ has been developed to improve the standard and quality of social welfare service of Ethiopian older persons for the coming 10 years. The plan of action is prepared in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with a view to contribute to poverty reduction, prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and improve the life of the society. In particular, considering the fact that conditions favorable for strengthening the participation of and care for the elderly has been created at national and international level and now that laws and policies concerning the elderly has been already issued and organizations working on this area has been flourished. It has become necessary to coordinate these activities so as to streamline and make them sustainable. While this action plan of action is prepared based on the socio-economic conditions in which the elderly people are living, and in line with the social and economic policies and strategies issued by the Ethiopian government, Madrid International Plan of Action of the elderly. UN Principles on Ageing and AU's policy framework and plan of action for he elderly, it has both national and international character.

The main objective of this action plan is to bring about concrete results with visible impact in the life of the elderly by expanding services and supports through concerted efforts of organizations working the elderly and securing the participation of the elderly themselves.

Besides efforts will be exerted to include other civic organizations and the private sectors to create additional capacity towards achieving the objectives of this National Plan of action.

This document consists of two main areas of focus, 13 issues, and 36 objectives with detailed activities. The successful implementation of the activities of the action plan needs coordinated effort of all concerned bodies and stake holders. In order to achieve the presumed objectives an implementation manual has been prepared and a system for monitoring and evaluation has been already put in place.

It is believed that the translation of this National Plan of Action into different Ethiopian languages will popularize among various sectors of the society and secure the participation of the community. Above all, the plan of action will serve as a spring board for those relevant agencies responsible for implementing activities of the constitution of FDRE and the Developmental Social Welfare policy.

Therefore, we call upon all concerned bodies and stakeholders to contribute their share in promotion, orientation and execution the National Plan of Action of older persons according to the set timeframe.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Chapter One

Introduction

Even though Ethiopian people speak different languages and have different cultures, they have common social values of peaceful co-existence, culture of tolerance, supporting each other and close social interaction. This way of life has existed as a tradition through many generations. However, due to manmade and natural disasters such as recurrent drought, famine and longstanding political instability, the people have been, exposed to chronic and object poverty. This deep rooted poverty has been a bottle neck to the development the country.

At present the county has adopted a system of Federal Administration based on the consent and equality of its people. To protect the democratic and human rights thereby bring about development and improved way of life, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) has issued various polices and proclamation with a view to build democratic system, a decentralized regional and urban administration and provide an effective government (public) services.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA), which was established according to proclamation No. 04/1995 has been mandated for functions, responsibilities *interalia*

"Studying ways and means of providing assistance to older persons and persons with disabilities to implements them in collaboration with relevant bodies."

With a view to discharge this responsibility, various activities are being carried out following the issuance of Development Social Welfare Policy (DSWP) of 1996. The policy is the first of its kind and mainly indicates ways of improving the lives of people under difficult circumstances. It has formulated 6 strategic issues concerning older persons. The main strategy of policy is adopting an integrated approach through which it encourages participation of other sectoral offices and in particular to expand social security services throughout the country based on the participation of the community.

It is believed that implementation of various economic and social programs, such as Poverty Reduction MGDs, Education, Health, Women; HIV/AIDS etc. will have significant contribution in realizing the goals of the Developmental Social Welfare Policy (DSPP). In addition the recently launched Civil Service Reform Program (CSRP) will help to build the implementation capacity of stakeholders. Based on the result of the Functional Review (FR) of various departments, Business Processing Reengineering (BPR) study and the mandate given to the Ministry, implementation procedures following a strategic direction with clear vision and transparency has been started.

This National Plan of action (1998 -2007) is developed based on the above points and in line with

- UN Principles For Older persons - 1991
- Madrid International Plan of Action (MIPAA) on Ageing: - endorsed by the UN in 2002.
- AU (African Union) Policy framework and plan of action on Ageing (AUPFAA) endorsed by heads of states in 2002.

The socio - economic survey conducted by some Regional Bureau of labor and social Affairs and other sources have been exploited as an input in preparing this document.

Structure of the document

The first part of this document provide highlight on the general situation of the elderly which contain objectives strategies, and the need for developing the NPAOP. Chapter two explores the main topic in-depth and lists specific objectives and activities in detail. Finally it describes the organization required for successful implementation of the action plan and specific responsibilities of the implementing bodies.

Although this NPAOP is prepared with the belief that it can be implemented with the coming ten years, because of changing circumstances at global and national level, it is possible that all may not be executed fully. However, much of the activities will be carried out and no activity will remain untouched. An Implementation Manual (IM) document with effective

Procedures are to be developed to process NPAOP. Besides with high level of awareness, lobbying work and with active participation of relevant stakeholders it is expected that a great deal of activities incorporated in this document will be carried out within the specified period of time.

1.1. General Situation of the Elderly

The term 'elderly' or older person has different meaning in different countries; it is mainly explained and is related to chronological age, functional Age as well as retirement age. According to the UN definition older persons are those people whose age is 60 years and over. The definition has gained acceptance in Ethiopian context as it coincides with the country's official retirement age.

Due to urbanization, industrial developments, the advance in science and technology, and modern way of life people are nowadays are able to live longer. Various reports and studies verify that the number of older persons in the world is growing at unprecedented rate. According to the estimate of the UN, the number of people aged 60 and above was 200 million in 1950, 590 million in 2000 and is projected to reach 2.1 billion in 2050.

In Ethiopia, due to serious shortage of data, it is difficult to provide detailed analysis about the socio-economic conditions of older persons. However, sample studies conducted in some of the regional states, (southern people, Amhara, Afar) and also reports of the Central Statistics Agency (CSA) pertaining to older persons have shown meaningful profile. According the census conducted by CSA in 1984, the number of people aged 60 and above was 2.7 million and it is projected to reach 5.3 million of 2020. As indicated in the report in the Ethiopian annual statistical abstract published in July, 2006, the total population of Ethiopia was 75 million out of which 3.3 were aged 60 and above. Likewise, out of the total of 12.2 million of urban dwellers 538, 800 and out of 62.9 million rural dwellers 2.8 million people were older persons. So it is clear from the report that the bulk of the aged population lives in the rural areas. In general, this demographic profile indicates that the

number of older persons is increasing rapidly and unexpectedly in all parts of the world.

Through life long accumulated knowledge and experience older person can maintain the continuity of traditions and culture of the society. In addition they can also contribute a lot in the development of their country. For these reasons the elderly in Ethiopia are treated with respect and love. In time of need, they get strong support and assistance from their family and community. However, when families or communities themselves face problems, it is difficult for older persons to get the usual support and assistance.

Nowadays, older persons are encountered with various problems which eventually expose them to begging due to the absence of the necessary family and community support. Hence it is common to see that older persons who have the knowledge and skill to help not only themselves but others are facing serious problems and resort to begging.

Ethiopia is one among the poorest countries in the world with 44.2 percent of its population living below poverty line. It is understood that disease, protracted war, recurrent drought, absence of good governance are some among the many problems facing the country. These problems together with the modern way of life caused by growing urbanization and modernization are now eroding the culture of intergenerational solidarity and mutual support that has been existing for a very long time and this increased the vulnerability of the society in general and older persons in particular.

Poverty become more acute among older persons because once they are exposed to it, it is much more difficult for them to come out of it. Health problems, lack of balanced diet, shelter, unsuitable residential areas, absence of family and community support, absence of social welfare coverage, limited social security services, absence of education and training opportunities, limited employment and income generating opportunities are some of the factors contributing to the poverty of older persons.

On the other hand HIV/AIDS is further complicating the problems of older persons. Older persons are being left helpless and without support as result of the death of their off springs caused by HIV/AIDS. They are exposed to poverty as they expend their limited asset and income to take care and pay the bills of their children infected by the virus. In spite of their being old, they are also shouldering the responsibility of bringing up their grand children in the country who lost their parents due to HIV/AIDS. At present there are about 1.2 million children who lost their parents and most of them are

provided care by their grand parents. Because of the false belief that the elderly are not exposed to HIV/AIDS, the great majorities of them are not included in HIV/AIDS prevention and control programs as result of which they are not benefiting from such programs.

In spite of the existence of cultural discrimination against women which deprives them the right to make decision regarding income and properties, women in all age groups and older women in particular provide service that can not be measured in monetary terms. They take care of and look after children, patients and older persons. They do all these without any payment or support and this has made their life much, more difficult and cumbersome.

Currently, Problems of older persons are receiving better attention worldwide. Much effort is being made to alleviate their problems. At a national level, government and non government organizations as well as association of retired persons have now started to make greater efforts in tackling problems of the elderly.

However, due to the absence of networking and inability to streamline the activities of the concerned bodies in conducting in depth study and designing and implementing programs and projects and due to the absence monitoring and evaluation systems and lack of implementation capacity, it has been difficult to improve the lives of the elderly to a significantly better level.

1.2. The Need for the plan of action

- Where as, parallel to the rapidly growing population at global and national level, the number of older persons is increasing dramatically.

- Since, the number of the elderly without support and assistance is in the rise as a result of aggravation of their problems.
- Where as, the issue of older person is attracting more and more attention and practical measure are being taken following the adoption of global and regional plan of actions on ageing.
- Where as, the task of implementing the (DSWP) has become imperative.
- Since it requires a special effort to meet the challenges of newly emerging social and economic issues such as HIV/AIDS and globalization.
- Where as, social protection for older persons are being provided in uncoordinated manner and lacks consistency.
- Since it is necessary to have a national and regional focal body that will coordinate the efforts being made by relevant bodies, the need to develop a plan of action for older persons is very crucial and the order of the day.

1.3. Goals of the plan of action

Developmental policies of the country are aiming at bringing about economic growth and reducing poverty and encourages social security protection programs based on the participation of the community. Participation of older persons involved in development activities, is equally essential to design programs and deliver services that address their economic and social

problems. Based on this premise the main goals of the NPAOP are the following.

- ❖ Expand and strengthen services for the elderly based on community participation.
- ❖ Encourage the elderly to make use of their rich experience in bridging about development.
- ❖ Make the rights and interests of older persons Part of development plans and poverty Reduction Strategy.
- ❖ Identify issues related to the elderly and work on them by listing specific objectives and Activities.
- ❖ Co-ordinate concerned government and non-government organization so as to enable them contribute their share in realizing the objectives of the program.
- ❖ Facilitate conditions to solicit support from abroad through promoting the issues of older persons of Ethiopia at national and international level.

Chapter Two

Priority Directions of the plan of action

Older Persons and Development, Advancing Health and Well-Being into Old Age, and Ensuring Enabling and Supportive Environments are the three priority directions of the (MIPAA). The document indicates that governments have the responsibility of putting into action the recommendations listed in the plan of action. In addition, the political declaration, endorsed by 159

member states emphasize the need to see problems of the elderly as related to social and economic rights and building a society for all ages which enables the elderly actively participate in economic, social, cultural and political activities by protecting their health and well-being.

While the AUPFPAA approved by African Union summit following the MIPAA, focuses on the need of improving the quality of life of the elderly it also urge African governments to translate the resolutions adopted at the international level into action by incorporating them in their national program.

Taking into consideration the International and Regional efforts being under taken and in light the stipulations in FDRE's constitution of Ethiopia and the DSWP pertaining to the elderly, this plan of action has set two priority directions which are interrelated but stand on separate pillars.

- Development aspect of ageing and
- Humanitarian aspect of ageing

2.1. Developmental Aspects of Ageing

Older persons are not only owners of extensive knowledge and rich experience accumulated during their long life, but they are also capable to participate in the social and economic development of their countries if they are given the chance. To enable older persons take part in development efforts has double advantage. On one hand they will get the opportunity for employment and feel productive and on another, they can be self-supportive and improve the quality of their own lives. Since they have the capacity to teach history, culture and work, the community should be able to make use of this resource.

The goal of building a society for all ages was endorsed by the General Assembly of the UN in connection with the designation of International day of older persons. (IDOP) This decision together with the existing favorable situation in Ethiopia creates an opportunity for older persons to use their knowledge and experience towards the development of the country. In light of this it is believed that the associations of older and retired persons that are flourishing these days can have significant contribution to development.

2.2. Humanitarian aspect of Ageing

The UN General Assembly, in its various resolutions stated that all the necessary efforts should be made to protect fundamental human rights without discrimination and partiality. Based on these resolutions, there are now many decisions, principles, directives and conventions adopted with a view to enable different sections of the society to proper attention according to their problems and interests. The UN principles for older persons Independence, participation, care self-fulfillment and dignity are being exercised in Ethiopia and many other countries. In this connection, it is important to create environments conducive for older persons to lead a dignified life with their rights protected and their basic needs fulfilled. This will eventually enable them participate in the economic, social, cultural, civil and political affairs of their country. However, these opportunities can not be realized equally everywhere in the society due to a number of reasons.

While in developed countries there exists the capacity and opportunity to protect rights and fulfill basic necessities of older persons, the situation in developing countries is quite difficult in the sense that services are not provided adequately due to backwardness and poverty. As result, older persons in these countries are exposed to severe problems of clothing, shelter, ignorance, various diseases including HIV/AIDS.

Therefore, when issue of older persons are discussed, it is essential to take into account their rights and basic necessities.

It is common to see various kinds of crises in a society where the social well-being of older persons is not fully protected. If older person are denied the support and care they need, they will be exposed to beggary and street life. So, the protection of the social well-being of older persons will ultimately lead to the prevention these and other social problems.

Chapter Three

Overall Strategies of the Plan of Action

In order to fulfill the basic necessities to protect the rights of older persons and with a view to create a conducive environment that enable them participate in development the government assumes the principal role and has taken the initiative to issue this plan of action for the elderly.

In the course of developing this plan of action, other government policies and strategies such as:

- Reduction and sustainable Development program.
- HIV/AIDS strategy.
- Millennium Development Goals.
- Developmental Social Welfare Policy.
- Population Policy.
- Education and Training Policy.
- Health Policy.
- Women's Policy.

Were taken into consideration and given due attention in the implementation process as these are the main implementation strategies of this plan of action.

The plan of action gives priority attention to older persons in general but particular emphasis is given to older persons under difficult circumstances which includes: older women, older persons with disabilities, rural elderly, displaced elderly and those affected by HIV/AIDS. To this end the overall participation of government and non-government organization (i.e., humanitarian organizations, associations of the elderly, the private sector religious institutions, civic organizations etc) and that of the society in general is highly required to address effectively the needs and problems of older persons.

It is only when the community fulfills its responsibility and employs good problem solving approaches that care and full participation of the elderly can be ensured. However, conventional problem solving methods such as piecemeal grants and alms do not help significantly towards achieving the goals set in this plan of action.

One of the main goals of the plan of action is to enhance the capacity of the community to identify the nature of the problems that our elderly people are facing. Hence the community has to be empowered at all level to find alternative salutations. This will create favorable condition for those older people to engage themselves in productive activities within their home environment. With respect to older persons who have special problems that require constant surveillance Organizing institutional care could be taken as an alternative. However institutional care is preferable only when community based care can not serve at all. For this reason the guiding principle of this national plan of action on older persons is community based service for older persons and based on this the following major strategies are employed.

3.1. Research

To understand the socio-economic condition of older persons, and eventually recommend policy directions, to solve problems promptly and to effectively implement projects and programs, conducting research is very essential. Research and study are given paramount importance as they help to correctly understand the prevalence and consequences of social problems. In light of this the following key issues are the major area of focus in the implementation process of the NAPAOP.

- MOLSA and Regional Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs (BOLSA) in accordance with the mandate they have, shall coordinate concerned bodies in conducting research regarding social, economic and psychological conditions of older persons in the country. To urge regional administration and the various government bureaus to establish a data bank and put in place a system of information dissemination for users.

- Work in cooperation with educational and research institutions of the federal and regional governments to incorporate in their research the specific issues of older persons and disseminate results.

- To put in place systems of monitoring and evaluation for the effective dissemination of information obtained from research results. In addition, information regarding the implementation of programs and projects would also be collected and distributed to encourage older persons engage in gainful development activities.

3.2. Data collection

The existence of reliable information is the most important factor to propose alternative solutions and respond to new developments. Policy makers, planners, researchers government and non government organizations need current information regarding older persons. Although there were some attempts by regions, they have not yet been gathered, organized at a federal level in such away they can be used by the concerned bodies. To streamline research activities in this area it

has now become imperative to put an information system in place and to this effect the following activities have been identified.

- In order to get adequate and reliable information regarding the elderly, a number of variables has to be provided to CSA. The variables can be used when the Agency undertake census every 10 years.
- Encourage collection of quantitative and qualitative data by focusing on short survey studies that require less finance and manpower.
- Organize data bank at federal level responsible for collecting, organizing and disseminating basic information regarding social welfare in general and older persons in particular.
- Organize similar bodies at regional level

3.3 Advocacy and Awareness Raising

Negative Attitude of the community towards older persons is one of the major obstacle in addressing the needs and problems of the elderly which eventually leads to less attention towards the issue. Therefore expansion of educational services and changing the attitude of the community to raise the level of awareness is of vital importance. In order to change perceptions regarding older persons, sustainable and intensive awareness raising work need to be carried out targeting policy makers, planners, decision makers, investors, religious leaders and the youth. In a nutshell in order to be able to expand social

welfare services and programs in the country, a continuous awareness raising and lobbying activities should be undertaken at all level. The following activities are essential.

- Raise community awareness that the country owes a lot to its older citizens using newspapers, magazine, brochures leaflets, billboards etc.
- Present artistic works that reflect and promote important skills and potential of older persons in collaboration with artists through plays music, paintings etc.
- Conduct awareness raising activities regarding problems, needs of and promote a positive image of older persons through religious and cultural media.
- Encourage the participation of associations of older persons and the community at large by commemorating (IDOP) a day dedicated to the plight of the elderly at the level of each administrative hierarchy.
- Prepare and conduct awareness raising seminars and symposia on issues of older persons at federal and regional down to the lowest administrative levels including the community.

3.4 Implementation capacity

For the activities and goals of the NPAOP to be realized, professionals, the GO, and NGOs and

associations working in the area need to have the required implementing capacity. These include training, finance, materials professional and technical inputs. In this regard the following activities will be carried out.

- With a view to strengthen the service provided to older person, MOLSA and regional BOLSA will prepare and execute their own manpower training programs
- The ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and Regional Labours and Social Affairs Bureaus will provide capacity building trainings to government and non government organizations and associations working on ageing
- Encourage non government organizations to provide capacity building assistance to associations of the elderly and pensioners
- Devise and execute various capacity programs to enhance technical and material competence of the federal ministry and regional bureaus to address problems of the elderly.
- Familiarize the federal office and regional bureaus with new working methods and technology by convening forums where they share experience and exchange information about best practices.

3.5. Co-ordination

The stakeholders and concerned parties involved in social welfare development programs in general, and the elderly in particular are many and varied. As the problems in this area are complex and multifaceted, this plan of action takes co-ordination as its major implementing strategy. Therefore the following key activities will be carried out.

- Create a forum to co-ordinate the activities of GOs and NGOs that are engaged and those interested to take part in implementing the NPAOP.
- Identify and assign activities for each member of the forum.
- Establish/ create similar forums at all levels to contribute their share in alleviating problems of older persons.

3.6. Monitoring and evaluation

Effective and reliable working methods without monitoring and evaluation are meaningless.

Without periodic monitoring and evaluation activities, programs can not be sustainable and effective. Therefore all the above mentioned strategies of research awareness raising, capacity building, coordination information gathering as well as all the programs projects and service require a system of monitoring and evaluation.

Chapter Four

National plan of action on older persons

/1998-2007/

Key Issues and activities

Issue Number One - Health and well being

Human beings must be healthy before anything else to perform day to day activity. Since a healthy society has the capacity to expedite development, it is crucial to ensure health service provisions beginning from prevention. The definition of World Health Organization (WHO) of health indicates that health is not only the absence of illness but includes physical, mental and social well-being of a person. In light of this, it is stated that human beings have the right to get health services and facilities without discrimination based on age, gender or race. The health policy of Ethiopia affirms health service focusing on prevention.

Since most health problems of older persons are related to poverty, lack of food and epidemic diseases, it is believed that the health policy of Ethiopia which focuses on prevention will benefit the elderly.

Health in old age is greatly determined by the pattern of living in the life course. Hence, promoting health and well-being throughout the life span is part of the process of achieving greater quality of life of older people.

Older persons face many health problems associated with longevity. On top of that, they are not beneficiaries of available health services. As result of these, it is difficult for them to utilize their potential and to effectively play their social roles. Considering the fact that older persons have special health problems, it is proper to find ways of providing the required services.

Women's health is directly affected by a negative cultural attitude starting from earlier years. When they reach old age complicated health problems awaits them. This may be more pronounced for older women living in rural areas. Since a great majority of women in rural areas face untimely death because of absence of health services, they must get proper attention they deserve.

Establishing a national research institution, providing education and training on diseases that affect the health of older persons, producing the required qualified personnel in large quantity are highly necessary. In addition for older persons suffering from incurable diseases Such as HIV/AIDS, permanent physical injury, dementia, (multiple diseases and mental illness) establishment of centers providing basic and long term care may possibly be one of the means of alleviating the problems of older persons.

The AU decision to designate the years 2001-2010 as "African Decade of traditional medicine" indicates the importance of traditional medicines in Africa. Older persons, who possess the knowledge of traditional medicines, provide extensive medical service in rural areas

where modern medical services are not available. However, they need training and awareness raising to prevent themselves from HIV/AIDS and other epidemic diseases. Traditional medical services are most beneficial if they are provided in complement with the modern one. Therefore, official recognition to the services and practitioners is of paramount importance.

**Objective 1 Enjoy an active and healthy ageing by
Expanding health education and disease
prevention.**

Key activities

- Provide adequate education and awareness raising about healthy life styles and physical exercises starting from early age in order to create a healthy society capable to engage in production and development.
- Take preventive measures for older persons to protect them from physical injuries and infection of HIV/AIDS.
- Developing a curriculum aimed at increasing the number of professionals in the field of ageing to deal effectively with health problems of older persons.
- Conducting research and study to identify diseases that commonly affect health of older persons; collect and disseminate information at local and national level.
- Providing successive trainings to older persons with regard to hygiene, sanitation diseases and their

symptoms, first aid, long term care, and the use of medicines.

- Facilitate conditions that will help older persons to get adequate food, adopt healthy and balanced eating habits so that they can protect themselves from diseases caused by malnutrition and unbalanced diet.

Objective 2 strengthen basic health care services and facilities

Key Activities

- Fulfill the preconditions that will enable the elderly receive basic health services within their locality without age and gender discrimination.
- Give special attention through policy supported measures to enable poor older person receive free medical services.
- Facilitate conditions for older persons in order that they are given priority in getting medical services at specially arranged schedules in hospitals and other health institutions.
- Increase the supply of geriatrics medicines and medical equipment adequate in quantity and quality.
- Work intensively to develop and expand education and services in the field of health of older persons.

- Encourage older persons to take HIV/AIDS tests and help them get counseling services and drugs for those infected with the virus.

- Encourage traditional medical practitioners and physicians to jointly conduct research so that traditional medicine can be used side by side with modern medical services.

- Organize trainings for older care so that older persons can get adequate health service at home as well as in hospitals.

- Ensure the participation of the elderly in making decisions pertaining to health service and care for older persons.

Objective 3. Enabling older persons suffering from multiple diseases and permanent injury receive long term treatment and care

Key activities

- Devise institutional and community based health services for older persons suffering from mental illness and physical injuries.

- Take action on curable diseases by providing timely treatment to reduce the incidence of depression, dementia and other mental illnesses.

- Design programs that enable older persons to be treated by trained care providers.
- Undertake monitoring and follow-up activities so that older persons suffering from mental illness, severe physical injury and incurable diseases can be treated with dignity at home and institutions and that those who recovered can be reunified with their family and community.
- Facilitate condition for older persons with physical injuries and disabilities so that they get prosthetic orthotic appliance and wheel chairs.

Issue Number Two

Family and community care

There is no other institution that can fully replace family to provide care for older persons. In rural areas of Ethiopia, as every where in Africa and other developing countries where extended family system is widely exercised, family takes responsibility in providing irreplaceable care for the overwhelming majority of rural older persons. Hence strengthening of families will have significant advantage to provide older persons the necessary care while they are in their home environment. In this process, it is important to give special attention to older women for their contribution to play greater role in the family chore. In the house, they take care of the sick and older persons and look after children.

Care provided at the community level also helps almost as equal as care that is being given at a family. Therefore community care should also need to be encouraged. Regarding care for older persons affected with HIV/AIDS, the service provided at community level usually tends to get primary position. It is important and beneficial to train and deploy trained care providers and promote community based care delivery in organized and regular manner. Both family and community care are categorized in the informal sectors where a vast majority of older persons are taken care of. Community care for older person may be favored next to family in terms of its financial, humanitarian and psychological advantage. However, for those suffering from multiple illnesses very weak and frail, it is necessary to take institutions as an alternative.

Developments such globalization i.e. the rapid growth in the number of older persons, the changing community the size and nature of families, expansion of education, social and economic development, changes in life style etc are producing greater impact on the lives of older persons. Nowadays, it is common to see intergenerational conflicts between the young and the elderly. Though it is necessary to go along with the modern way of life, Ethiopian rural families are still taking responsibility of caring for older persons not as an act of charity but as a duty. If family continues to provide care and support with commitment all generations will benefit and intergenerational solidarity strengthened as it was to be. However, in order to prevent the discontinuity of these services as a result of economic problems, it is necessary to strengthen the family economically or otherwise.

Objective 1. Strengthen and sustain care for older persons through rural community and extended family system.

Key activities

- Build the social and economic capacity of the family.

- Expand community based and community centered care for older persons.

- Build social and infrastructural facilities to will create employment and educational opportunities, provide health care services, improved living

standards in rural areas in order to mitigate the migration of youth to urban areas.

- Undertake in a coordinated manner economic and cultural development programs and activities that will help to sustain the traditional mutual support among generations so that it may not be eroded and loosened.

Objective 2 Enabling the urban families (which are changing to a nuclear one) provide proper care and support to older persons.

Key Activities

- Take concrete measures that will reduce poverty at family level and alternative actions to mitigate shortage of residential houses and congestion.
- Provide special support to those households providing care and support for the elderly and support the efforts of self-help initiatives and cooperation among older persons.
- Provide technical and professional supports for the community based age care organizations engaged themselves in the provision of integrated community service for older persons.

Issue Number Three

Rights of the elderly

Rights of the elderly are those declared in the UN principles of older persons adopted in 1991 and they are Independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity. These principles are based and articulated in the context of international convention of human rights adopted in 1948 by the UN.

The achievement and contribution older persons in our society in areas of family, community, religion, **Idir** and **Iqub** is an evidence, that they owe a lot to their country, history and culture. Taking into account the enormous contributions of older persons, the society has a longstanding culture to give due consideration to our senior citizens and protect their rights.

Basic needs of the elderly are met when their rights to obtain food, shelter, health services, employment income generation, social insurance, credit, education and training on equal basis, live in areas of their choice, participate actively on issues of their concern, legal protection that enables to live in freedom, support from community and institutional services, free to practice their faith and receive special services and lead a dignified life.

Since the lives of the elderly are closely intertwined with that of the society, they have the right to develop and execute policies on issues concerning their life and well being, to transmit knowledge and experience to the younger

generation. They have also the right to serve their society as volunteers in creating and developing conditions conducive to development.

The elderly have the right to be engaged in activities that protect their rights, and that they have the right for social protection in accordance with the cultural laws and norms of the society. These provisions however should be considered as a right, not as a privilege. It is right and proper to provide the elderly with timely preventive and curative services so as to protect their physical & mental well being and enable them to have healthy life, and with legal protection needed to live in freedom as well as the appropriate institutional and rehabilitative services. It is necessary to protect their rights to have shelter, medical institutions and care centers for the elderly and protect their human dignity. The right to their faith and liberty.

One of the things older persons require to lead a healthy and happy life peacefully is to get proper respect. They need to be evaluated and treated fairly without being discriminated on economic capacity physical disabilities, age, gender, race and ethnic background. Provision of support to the elderly should by no means imply imposition or a feeling of dependency, inferiority, or passive recipient of support. More importantly their right should be respected not from external support only, but from their own active participation.

No one speaks about the right of older persons better than the older persons themselves Hence, they must be given the opportunity to form organizations of their own.

Objective 1- To properly understand rights of older persons.

Key Activities

- Undertake successive awareness raising programs and provide information that enable the society understand the rights of older persons.
- Disseminate and inculcate the UN principles of older persons to different sector of the population using every opportunity.
- Undertake awareness raising activities that enable older persons protect their rights.
- Enable the young generation to be familiar about the rights of the elderly and about the positive image of ageing in schools and outside so that it can acquire the knowledge to teach others.

Objective 2 Enabling older persons exercise their rights

Key activities

- Promulgate laws that protect rights of older persons.

- Lobby policy makers and executive bodies to enable older persons to make their voice heard when laws concerning their issues are enacted.

- Since the issues of older persons are cross cutting, make all stakeholders participate in preparing plans and designing program related to protection of the right of older persons.

- Encourage and support the establishment of cooperatives and self-help groups through which older persons can exercise their rights.

- Develop strategies for the realization of UN principles of older persons which are listed Independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity.
 - Create appropriate situations for older persons to get services without discrimination based on race age or gender.

Issue Number Four

Housing and Living Environment

A Good feeling, sense of security and healthy way of life that is realized due to ageing in place is immeasurable. For the elderly to lead a peaceful life in the remaining years, ageing in place gives them psychological satisfaction beyond material benefit. Older persons, who lived in more than one place for long because of the demands of life, ought to pass their remaining years in places of their choice. The majority (85%) of older persons in Ethiopia live in rural area where kinship ties are still prevalent. However, the elderly can possibly be lonely, frail and left without support when younger members of the family migrate to urban centers for varied reasons. The Migration to urban centers will continue unless the rural areas become conducive for employment, social and economic development. On the other hand there are a number of occasions in which the elderly themselves are compelled to leave their localities for urban centers.

The life of older persons who migrated from far places to urban centers such as Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, Bahir Dar and other urban centers, and who live in large numbers inside and around the premises of religious institutions, on streets and around traffic lights has become of great concern.

Unless poverty, the main enemy of rural older persons, is eradicated, the family will fail to maintain its traditional role as the major source of support to the elderly. It is possible the migration to be curbed as the

development gap narrows as a result of rural and agricultural based development strategy, which was launched by the government recently. Rural based development strategy is also necessary to encourage, the participation of the society in general and older persons in particular, in poverty reduction programs for it improves the economic standard of the family. Pastoralists live scattered and frequently move from place to place in search of water and pasture. It is obvious that older persons in these communities may be exposed to untimely (premature) death as a result of such difficult way of life.

It is necessary to formulate a policy that encourages and facilitates the expansion of transportation services, so that older person living in urban areas can have transport access without much fatigue. The construction of elder-friendly homes, buildings and roads free of obstructions are essential for better and easier livelihood.

For older persons displaced by circumstances beyond their control, and who cannot or do not want to return, back but prefer to live with communities in a new environment, they need to obtain shelter, counseling and employment.

Objective 1- Enable Older Persons benefit from

various services within their

living environment.

Key Activities

- Assist older persons live in their localities as much as possible.
- Provide various incentives to families caring for older persons.
- Facilitate the construction of homes free of charge for voluntary families assisting lonely older persons within their premise.
- Enable older persons who want to live in their previous area of residence to get houses with priority and at lower price.
- Devise working procedures that facilitate access the elderly to receiving pension allowances, market, medical, recreational etc. services near their area of residence.

Objective 2- To improve the livelihoods of the rural elderly

Key Activities

- Encourage regional governments to formulate policies that will improve the livelihood of older persons and follow-up their implementation.
- Make the elderly beneficiaries and participants of poverty reduction program

- Foster ways through which older persons that cannot farm their land or harvest their products can get support from the community.
- Devise strategies to help poor older persons who are without support to get land, oxen, seeds, farming tools/implements etc.
- Foster opportunities through which older person can get information and training on ways of improving their lives.
- Employ different approaches for older persons in pastoralist communities receive the attention they deserve.

Objective 3- Integrate older persons living in distant places to their area of residence.

Key Activities

- Integrate older persons who want to return to areas of their residence by extending the necessary support.
- Integrate older persons with their new community and supporting them to be independent.
- Enable older persons who can not return and need long term care receive institutional support.

Objective 4- Help older persons live in elder-friendly houses.

Key Activities

- Repair houses of poor older persons and make them suitable for movement.

- Devise ways to enable older persons possess houses of their own.

- Promote the construction of neighborhood houses for older persons left alone due to divorce or bereavement.

Objective 5- Make older persons living environment accessible for mobility and services.

Key Activities

- Consider the design of social, and infrastructural services and facilities appropriate with the needs of older persons.

- Assist older persons obtain transportation service free of charge or with reduced prices.

- Ensure older persons with physical disabilities get assistance in the form of physiotherapy, and Outhouses prosthesis appliances.

- Familiarize older persons with new products of technology so that they may not be dependent and alienated.

- Remove step by step problems that may result in pollutions and situations detrimental to the health of older persons.

- In collaboration with relevant bodies make sure and take follow up measures that buildings and roads are constructed free of barriers to the mobility of older persons.

- Ensure the participation of older persons when housing policies or buildings and roads are designed.

Issue Number Five

Social Security

The majority of older persons are engaged in the informal and tiresome fields of works. They continue to work until they become seriously ill or die. However the income they earn from jobs hardly meet their basic needs. Older persons are forced to stay in these informal jobs because they have no access to social security. They are left without care and support, because they have no source of income or saving except their labor.

As a result of negative attitudes on women, it is difficult for them to possess property or save money in their name. As most women are engaged in domestic works which do not require payment and some of them who got employed in the formal sector have lower salaries as a result of biases against them. And yet they are forced to leave their jobs on many pretexts including giving birth. After passing-through this kind of life, they find themselves penniless as they survive into old age. When they lose their spouses by death their life become more miserable.

Older persons are usually confronted with varied problems such as destitution, frailty, loneliness, disability and health problems. In such instances, the society has so far been voluntary in providing support and care for older persons owing to its culture of solidarity and reciprocity

to alleviate the problems. The penal and civil code issued in 1948 and 1960 respectively legislate that the kins and those related by marriage have the duty/responsibility to help a person in need. Modern concept of pension was started following the proclamation of 1961 and later the amended scheme of 1963.

Among the nine minimum standards issued by International Labor Organization (ILO), those covered by social security programs in Ethiopia at present are old age, survivors, invalidity, and injury at work, while compensation for illness, medical service and maternity allowance are included in the proclamations of civil service and the labor law. So far uncovered social security benefits are family allowance and unemployment insurance. The pension law covers only government employees and this account only 16 per cent of the total ageing population.

Hence, there is a need to employ mechanisms that allow older persons in the informal sectors (other than government employees) to have access to the social security program. This requires the designing and introduction of different kinds social security systems. The experience of South Africa shows that introducing non-contributory pension reduces poverty and vulnerability by gradually covering older persons living below poverty line particularly those who live in rural areas. The other service that enables older

persons earns middle level income is social pension. The purpose is to enable poor older heads of households earn sufficient minimum income by providing them assistance based on work.

It is possible to improve the health of older persons having access to social pension and enable them to have at least one meal a day by providing them with credit services. Older persons spend their money wisely and invest on income generating activities, cover medical expenses and pay school fees for children. In general social pension plays a greater role in reducing chronic poverty. It encourages investment; enabling children to continue their education is a long term investment by itself.

The other means of social security is Income transfer. It is one of the recommended means of improving the lives of poor older persons. Overall, it is crucial to up date (increase) income of older persons who are covered in the formal and informal pension inline with current market prices to prevent their purchasing power from being undermined by escalating cost of living.

Objective 1- Enabling step by step all older persons be covered by social security schemes.

Key Objectives

- Foster various social security systems to cover vulnerable older persons such as women, older persons with disabilities and the oldest old etc.

- Establish social security system based on gender equity and in particular develop social protection system.
- Establish a system based on research that enables to update pension allowance in line with current cost of living.
- Provide the necessary support to those older persons who can not take their pension allowance in person and those without any support.
- Collaborate with undertakings aimed at studying investment opportunities that can increase the size of pension fund.
- Facilitate studies to explore means of providing pension to older persons living below the poverty line and not covered by pension to have access to social and non contributory pension. Follow up the allocation of recurrent budget to augment their incomes.
- Create awareness on how to develop the culture of saving money at younger ages to be used in later years.
- Conduct studies to explore possibilities for social security to be covered by the private sector as its expansion greatly contributes to the reduction of poverty.

- Propose recommendations based on studies that help to attain the minimum standards for social security service issued by the ILO.

Issue Six

Education and Training

Education is a key to the overall development of a society and of a country. One of the millennium development goal is to provide access to primary education for all boys and girls of school age. Education is an important means of eradicating poverty and backwardness by making it accessible to all sections of the society including older persons. Education and training are not only key tools, but also result of development. To produce trained manpower required for the successful implementation of the rural and agricultural development strategy, urban and industrial development strategy etc. is one primary goal of the capacity building strategy and program. It is only when the rights of all citizens to education and training are ensured, without gender and age discrimination, that the country is able to enhance productivity and achieve sustainable development. The presence of this opportunity helps to do away with the marginalization of the elderly from knowledge and employment. It will create a conducive environment to let them cope with new technological innovations. With the understanding that education and training is not limited by age, it is necessary to have a policy direction to expand long term educational and training service for all, including adult education. It is expected that the current education and training policy will solve problems that have been existing so far.

The participation of older persons in present day Ethiopia is highly regarded since their rich wisdom and experience and the country's ancient cultures which so far have been

passing through generations orally need to be written and documented. It is the responsibility of all concerned bodies to promote the rights of older persons to learn acquire knowledge and get training by creating and raising awareness among educational and training institutions, mass media and the society in general.

Appropriate forum need to be created and convened to enable older persons to share their knowledge and skills to the community.

Objective 1- Enable the society gain indepth knowledge and understanding about older persons in areas of education and training.

Key Activities

- Undertake advocacy works that will foster sound understanding about the needs of older persons about education and training.

- Develop the understanding of the society on issues related to ageing and old persons,

- Work to make gerontology, geriatrics and similar disciplines be parts the country's educational curriculum.

Objective 2- Enable older persons to live properly by providing them access to education and training.

Key Activities

- Assist older persons to have access to continued education without any discrimination.
- Foster the enhancement of the productivity of older persons through access to appropriate education and training according to their choice and potential.
- Provide access for older persons with disabilities to special education and training opportunities equitably.

Objective 3- Provide Older persons with access to modern methods of working and technology

- Provide older persons with adequate information about the products of science and technology that are important to their life and well-being.
- Facilitate older persons access to consecutive trainings enable them be beneficiaries of latest products of technology.
- Integrate older persons with limited capabilities with modern ways of life by providing them special support.

Objective 4- Enhance the participation of older persons to enable them transfer their accumulated knowledge and skills to the new generation.

Key Activities

- Create intergenerational solidarity aimed at transferring knowledge and experience among generations.

- Explore opportunities in which male and female older persons can be able transfer/transmit their knowledge and experience to the new generations.

- Enable older persons with various skills/capabilities work in as much as they can as volunteers and with payment to improve the lives of the community.

Issue Number Seven

Employment and Income Generation

It goes without saying that income of older persons decline when they retire or interrupt employment due to old age. Older persons need to get proper employment, credit service or various appropriate supports to be able to generate sufficient minimum income. Although the capable once among the elderly can possibly get employed in income generating jobs, because of misconception, they perceive themselves as lacking the skill and capacity to work. For this reason, their chance for employment is actually limited. Since older people are engaged in agricultural and domestic works with no or little payment, it is difficult for them to be independent.

It is possible to say the effort so far on the part of the community to support older persons, benefit from income generating employment was rather short lived and lack breadth and sustainability. The efforts of the NGOs engaged in supporting older persons are limited in terms of access for employment and income generating jobs by devising strategies of utilizing their potential and skills.

Most of the elderly have no regular and reliable income as they get very limited employment opportunity. As a result they have no access to various social services. Meeting their basic necessities becomes a very difficult task. Most of them live in poverty due to the low standard of living.

It is to the advantage of the community, not only the elderly that to increase their income through employment generation and provision of credit services stopping the discrimination and bias against them, which requires the concerted effort of government NGOs, the private sector and the society at large.

Objective 1- Change the negative attitude concerning employment and income generating jobs for older persons

Key Activities

- Change the attitude of older persons who refrained from being employed as a result of their perception of themselves as unproductive.

- Undertake awareness raising works to change the attitude of the community and employers using different means to get rid of biases against the competence and productivity of older persons.

- Raise awareness of organizations engaged in encouraging investment and expanding of micro and small enterprises to take the capacities of the elderly into account in the delivery of their service.

- Create awareness aimed at encouraging the participation of older persons in all national programs particularly in job creating projects, issues of employment, credit provisions etc.

- Promote and raise awareness of the community about the fact that older women undertake domestic and outdoor jobs that have great social and economic values without being remunerated.

Objective 2- Enable the elderly to be engaged in Productive works through reliable income and permanent employment.

Key Activities

- Foster the employment of older persons that can generate regular income commensurate to their capabilities without discrimination on grounds of age.
- Foster employment of older persons in the formal and well as informal sectors according the knowledge and skills they possess so as to enable them augment their reduced income due to retirement.
- Encourage older persons to engage in small scale and micro enterprises.
- Enable older persons to lead independent life; expand their employment opportunities by providing those already doing informal jobs and those who want to do the same to improve their income, productivity and working conditions by providing them with land, seeds, and farm implements and by helping them find market for their products/services.
- Ensure older persons access to credit and saving services to enable them secure reliable income.

- Support families to enhance their income and capacity whose elders have become invalid due to old age and illness.
- Support and assist development proposals initiated by older persons themselves aimed at creating regular income generating jobs that utilize their creativity and experience to benefit themselves and their country.
- Ensure that older persons are considered in trainings given to farmers and pastoralist alike to help them be engaged in modern agricultural practices by abandoning the outmoded ones.

Issue Number Eight

Poverty Reduction

Poverty among Ethiopian older persons like other developing countries is prevalent and deep rooted. The causes of the problems are frequent economic crises, general backwardness, civil war and drought. The cumulative effect of these causes has exposed older person to abject poverty.

Out of the total population of the country, 44.2 percent live below the poverty level. Though it is difficult to know exactly what proportion of the total 3 million older people in the country live in poverty, it is not equally

difficult to tell that considerable number of these old persons are found in the vicious cycle of poverty. Those who lived in poverty in their earlier years as a result of the general poverty situation are usually compelled to face a formidably chronic poverty in the time of their old age.

Poverty reduction strategies and policies are currently being formulated and implemented in all parts of the world. It is clearly indicated that the effort to reduce poverty as major part of the MDGs could be achieved by including older persons in the process. While recognizing and motivating the contribution of older persons in the process of poverty reduction can meaningfully contribute towards development, involving them in productive life is always neglected in many countries.

The majority of Ethiopian older persons live and work in the rural areas with primitive agricultural tools and making their works debilitating that require much physical strength. Yet they are not spared from this difficult life to the end.

Older women find themselves in abject poverty as result of being denied decision making powers, the right to property ownership and of being assigned to works that do not generate income and problems caused by HIV/AIDS. Older person with disabilities are more exposed to severe poverty. Because of the discrimination and inaccessible working places they face greater employment problems compared to older persons with relatively less disabilities.

Objective 1- To reduce the general poverty prevalent among the elderly.

Key Activities

- Undertake awareness raising interventions about the importance of older persons participation in poverty reduction endeavors in general, and in reducing the poverty prevalent among older persons in particular.
- Include issues of older persons in the program and action plans designed with poverty reduction targets.
- Work with due attention to include the elderly in the effort to reduce poverty by half in 2015 as indicated in MDGs.
- Take institutional and collaborative (joint) measures to ensure employment and credit service, income generating activities and equitable access for resources for the success of the poverty reduction program.
- Ensure that the needs of older women, the oldest old, displaced and older persons with disabilities are included in poverty reduction strategies and implementation program.
- Give special consideration to older persons using outdated production tools and backward methods so that they can improve their products and overcome poverty.

- Provide study based support for households headed by older persons to prevent them from disintegration due to poverty.
- Create conditions for destitute older persons to be included and supported in the poverty reduction strategies.

Objective 2- To bolster up the participation of older persons in poverty reduction activities.

Key Activities

- Enhance the participation of older persons to enable them contribute their share using their potentials and knowledge in the campaign against poverty.
- Fight biases against older persons and backward practices that undermine their participation in the effort to reduce poverty.
- Ensure the participation older persons in the process of designing poverty reduction strategies of the country.
- Foster the socio - economic participation of older persons and enable them benefit from development.

Objective 3- Design and implement gender-focused poverty reduction strategies

Key Activities

- Provide legal support for women's access to resources equitable to men.

- Ensure that the needs of older women are given special attention and included in poverty reduction strategies and implementation programs.

- Eliminate traditional harmful practices aggravating poverty in women in general and older women in particular. Take measures to establish social protection services focusing on gender related poverty.

Issue Number Nine

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS had brought about unexpected and unimaginable damage since the last two decades. It has resulted in not only health but also social, economical and psychological problems to the society in general. Older persons are among the community who are exposed to various economic, and emotional problems such as Poverty and loneliness due to HIV/AIDS pandemic.

HIV/AIDS affect older persons directly and indirectly. While taking care of the sick and looking after their grand children, their chance of being infected by the virus is very high. Due to lack of awareness and information many older persons are directly infected by the virus during the time when they take care of the sick.

A number of studies and reports indicate that prior to the incidence of HIV/AIDS, the number of orphan and venerable children (OVC) in developing countries constitute 2 percent. Where as in 2005 it has shot up to 11 percent. The current report indicates that 13.2 million children have become orphan due to AIDS worldwide. Out of this number 12 million children are in sub Saharan Africa. Today 600,000 children lose one or both of his parents because of AIDS.

In Ethiopia, 1.2 million children are orphaned as a result of AIDS. Who is taking care of the children, found under this threat? In sub-Saharan countries, 5 million grand

parents have taken responsibility of caring for orphans. For instance the study from Zimbabwe revealed that 90 percent of orphan children are under the custody of older persons.

It is now encouraging to see significant achievements at the international and national level in the prevention and control of the economic, social and psychological impact of HIV/AIDS on older persons. One of the eight MDGs is to halt and then reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. The declaration of commitment on HIV/AIDS by the General Assembly of 2001 calls for state members to formulate national policies for children, boys and girls who lost their parents due to HIV/AIDS and for care providers particularly women and older persons.

It is stipulated in paragraphs 78-81 in the MIPAA, to review the economic impact of HIV/AIDS on older persons, particularly in their role as care providers as agreed in the UN. Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. The plan of action also stated about the provision of adequate information training and social support for older persons. It is well known that older persons can play greater role in leading, advising and coordinating the community in the fight can be used as a reminder for all against the disease which remind every body to search to seek their contribution.

The Ethiopian government has successively taken various measures starting from establishing National Task Force, then HIV/AIDS Council and Secretariat and later HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office. Recently other TF with members had drawn from various ministerial offices and

agencies was set up. Although significant improvement has been achieved so far, the great harm caused by the disease continues unabated. So there is a need to continuously address the problem with strategic direction and coordination of all stake holders. In this connection GO, NGOs and the community working on areas of care and support for the elderly are urged to join hands with the government and contribute their share in implementing government anti-AIDS program and strategies.

Objective 1- To create awareness and prevent the impact of HIV/AIDS on the elderly.

Key activities

- Conduct survey/studies aimed at the direct and indirect impact of HIV/AIDS on the elderly.

- Create awareness about problems and needs of older caregivers in charge of children who lost their parents because of HIV/AIDS. Provide/arrange education and information access to the community to prevent discrimination and stigma against affected members of their families.

- Encourage local and community leaders (elders) to participate in advocacy work particularly on stereotypes related to HIV/AIDS.

- Foster a system of provision of education and counseling by elder fathers to the young generation to help them abandon dangerous practices and start to lead a safer way of life.

- Provide continued education to enable older persons affected by HIV/AIDS and children who lost their parents because of HIV/AIDS; know the rights and benefits they are entitled to and provided for by the law.
- Enable religious organizations to provide information, on the nature of HIV/AIDS, its ways of transmission, its economic, social and psychological effects on older persons and children; how take measures to do away discrimination, how to apply ways and means for provision of care etc. as part of their religious/spiritual education.
- Undertake extensive and comprehensive awareness raising campaign by enabling the society to discuss the issue openly and through mass media.
- Use special occasions such as African children's Day, International AIDS Day, IDOP to create awareness about problems of older persons and OVC who are affected and infected by HIV/AIDS.
- Encourage older persons to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS and take HIV tests.

Objective 2. Pay due attention and Provide support to older persons directly or indirectly affected by HIV/AIDS.

Key Activities

- Through the participation of older persons, undertake income generating programs of older persons by

considering to health, functional abilities, economic status, local culture etc of the persons involved.

- Encourage older persons and their family members to get training such as project design and implementation, ways /means of income generation etc. and benefit from available credit services.
- Provide counseling services as required by trained professionals to bereaved older persons and children who lost their grand parents.
- Provide economic, social and psychological assistance to older persons who have members in their family with HIV/AIDS.
- Encourage and give recognition to both promising traditional medicines and herbs and their practitioners.
- Provide older persons who are looking after orphan and vulnerable children with financial, material medical, counseling etc services.
- Coordinate organizations working on HIV/AIDS to include older persons in their support programs.
- Introduce self help system where HIV/AIDS affected older persons either individually or in groups form support groups. Ensure the participation of older

persons in the formulation and implementation of HIV/AIDS related guidelines and programs.

- Encourage the participation of older persons in the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS by making use of their leadership role in various social issues.

Issue Number Ten

Gender and Older Persons

Various studies and reports indicate that in almost every country older women live longer than men. This situation shows a marked difference as age increases. The number of Ethiopian elderly women over 90 years of age reached 5000 in 2000 while that of men of the same age group was only 2400. Population projections show the number of elderly women will continue to grow proportionally over the coming years.

Due to the long standing and widely exercised traditional harmful practices, the attitude towards women continues to be unjust and unbalanced. So older women as parts of female population are not exempted from these problems. As they get older and older, and due to feminization of old age they live in destitution and loneliness. This problem is more pronounced for those who have lost their husbands.

Many older women shoulder multiple responsibilities of caring the sick, raising orphan and vulnerable children and children who lost their parents because of HIV/AIDS and provide care for older persons who must stay at home because of old age.

They work from dawn to dusk every day to get few coins. Almost all of the time they engage themselves in casual works which has very little income. Since this meager income can not cover their minimum daily expenses, they are forced to beg. Older women do not obtain remuneration for the service they provide both in and outside the house and

their contributions are not clearly recognized. They are erroneously considered as dependents living on the support of others. Due to these attitudes older women are given less attention and respect they ought to deserve as compared to their counterparts.

Efforts are now under way to equally focus on both older women and older men together as a result of better understanding on gender issues in general. As their number is considerable, it has a great impact on the development of the country. It is also recognized that older women outnumber older men and have greater contribution in social, economic and political, lives of their respective countries. This has been evidenced by the UN 4th International. Women Conference, the successive decisions passed in Dakar and Beijing as well as legislations in Africa and at a national level.

Objective 1. Fight wrong perceptions about older women; do away with traditional harmful practices and give recognition and respect to the contribution of older women and men.

Key activities

- Undertake awareness raising activities about gender; and older women's contribution in providing family care, raising grand children, marriage counseling, as practioners of traditional medicine cooking, handicrafts etc.

- Make efforts to fight stereotypes regarding gender issues in general and older women in particular.

Objective 2. To enhance the Social, economic and

political role of older women

Key activities

- Ensure full participation of older women at Kebele, Kifle-ketema, wereda, zone, regional levels and in councils of people's representatives and federation, by taking advantage of conducive environment created to ensure the equality of women.

- Facilitate the benefit of older women and men from legislations and policies issued to respect the right of women in the country based on and in line with the principle of building a society for all ages.

- Encourage older women to form their own organizations; co-operatives self-support associations etc. in order to enable them protect their basic human rights.

- Conduct studies and gather information regarding contributions of elder woman within and outside the home.

Objective 5. Cater for the problems of oldest and frail women through care and support programs.

Key activities

- Give special focus in providing the bereaved and widowed older women and who have children under their custody with necessary care and support as much as possible, in their living environment or in centers and institutions as a last resort.

Issue Number Eleven

Food and Nutrition

Food is one of the basic necessities of life. To lead a healthy life, one has to take the daily required balanced diet. A child who cannot get the daily nutrients cannot grow in a proper way. Similarly an older persons who can not get balanced diet lose their weight and is unable to perform their daily activities. In any country the elderly are grouped into the part of a society which is poor and unable to get adequate food. Since most Ethiopian elderly lead a subsistence life, those who can afford to have regular meals are very few. In general the majority of older persons has poor health and are physically weak as a result of low standard of living, lack of balanced diet insufficient and unreliable income.

The exposure to lack of food is mainly connected with poverty; however, it has other physical, psychological and social causes. There are other difficulties in areas of food and nutrition that older persons face. These are related to dental problems, illness, physical (injury) disabilities, bereavement, dementia (loss of memory), inability to prepare their foods which impede them from having balanced diet etc. As a result they are exposed to lack of food. When lack of food gets more severe, it can possibly cause illness or death. On the contrary some older persons may get heavier as a result of irregular meals and inappropriate food types for their age.

Although extensive food and nutritional studies pertaining to all other age groups have been conducted continuously,

similar studies concerning older persons have so far been very limited. As a result, inappropriate food types for older persons are not clearly identified. On top of that, the number of older persons who have access to clean potable water is unacceptably very small.

The kinds of foods consumed by older persons should be suitable for their body and rich in proteins, disease preventing vitamins, energy giving carbohydrates and minerals. Such types of food help older persons protect themselves from physical and emotional instability or delay complications which may arise due to longevity.

Objective 1. Identifying of the daily food requirements, food needs and nutrition of older persons

- Conduct nutritional studies related to older persons in different parts of the country.
- Provide education for older persons, care providers and the community at large about the minimum daily requirements and calorie intakes of older persons so that they can use foods which are rich in protein, vitamins and minerals.
- Include nutritional needs of older persons in trainings of health professionals and care providers to familiarize them with techniques of Anthropometry and B.M.I chart according to body size.

Objective 2. Ensure older persons have access to adequate and balanced diet.

Key activities

- Conduct survey on how to tackle nutritional problems that come with old age and recommend possible solutions.
- Enable older persons to have equitable access to food and clean water.
- Promote the participation of older persons in the process of food self-sufficiency program so that they can be benefited.
- Facilitate the implementation of health care and disease prevention programs by focusing on diseases that affect older persons as result of food shortage.

Objective 3. Regulate the possible occurrence of nutritional complication on older persons**Key activities**

- Create awareness among the community that older persons need to have balanced diet like any other person.
- Explore the effects of alternative foods produced in different localities with regard to their contribution to over weight with a view to prevent unhealthy nutrition of older persons.
- Create awareness to avoid unbalanced food consumption habits between men and women.

Issue Number Twelve

Emergencies

People are displaced from their comfortable homes as a result of natural and manmade disasters. Displacement and immigration engender complicated social, psychological and economic crises, for all people under the threat. Children, women and older persons who can not protect themselves are more vulnerable. In times of emergencies older persons are confronted with problems of food, clothing, shelter support, illness, physical injuries and displacement. Emergency situations will also lead older persons and their families to great shock trauma and anxiety.

While emergencies such as drought war, conflict and starvation can occur in any place at any time, the capacity to mitigate and contain the damages differs from country to country. Those countries with stronger economic base and advanced development have better capacity to withstand and come out of emergency situations. On the contrary developing countries have by far less capacity and suffer enormous damages as a consequence. These countries inevitably face long term and complex problems and it is difficult for them to recover unless supported and assisted by others. It is clearly stated in MIPAA that special attention is given to older persons of developing countries during and after disasters and emergencies.

In Ethiopia various types of disasters have occurred in different places. As a result of disasters caused by war, drought and starvation, older persons are forced to leave

their families and localities. Older persons are more victimized for they tend to give priority for others in time of emergencies. Reports indicate that older persons refrain from eating just to give priority for others. Recent report from Borena shows that older persons refused to eat so as not to share the little food that remained after the disaster had occurred in the area.

It is understood that older persons can play greater role to give traditional early warning, preparedness activities in coping with emergencies mitigating disasters and rehabilitating communities during and after emergency situations.

Objective 1. Preventing conflicts and emergencies

Key activities

- Integrate older person's indigenous knowledge and traditional practices with modern technology, to undertake programs of soil and water conservation. The use of modern techniques to mitigate drought and famine, and optimum use of irrigation in drought prone, and environmentally degraded pastoral areas.

- Undertake programs of voluntary resettlement of communities from drought prone area to fertile area with sufficient, extensive and intensive awareness raising activities and enable older persons and representatives of the community visit these resettlement areas in advance.

- Foster cultural practices of negotiation, compromise and tolerance in handling and solving conflicts

occurring among pastoral communities in the use of pasture and water.

- Provide continued awareness raising education, taking into account older persons contribution and introduce the society with signs of early warning to prevent the occurrences of conflicts and emergency situations.
- Encourage Federal and Regional bodies to recognize the positive contribution of older persons in preventing, managing and reconstruction activities of conflicts and emergencies
- Employ mechanisms to collect information regarding the causes and solutions of conflicts and emergencies and establish system that enables communities to exchange information quickly among concerned bodies when signs of emergencies are observed.

Objective 2. Provision of basic necessities, protection of human rights of older persons during natural disasters and other emergency situations

Key activities

- Take measures to protect the well-being of older persons and provide health care facilities and social rehabilitation service for the traumatic and the physically injured in times of conflicts and foreign aggression.
- Launch appeal for assistance by providing adequate information to foreign governments and international aid organizations so that they can provide

humanitarian and emergency relief assistance to older persons and ensure their well being as stipulated in the UN Generally assembly decisions regarding the provision assistance during displacement and immigration.

- Encourage aid providers, agricultural development workers, and young farmers and students to take appropriate measures taking into account health physical condition, frailty physical disability emotional instability etc of older persons.
- Give special attention to integrate older persons with diverse cultural backgrounds existing in Addis Ababa and other big cities to strengthen their cohesion to the new environment.
- Provide the necessary support to reunify older persons with their spouse and children to regain their family life and recover from their traumatic experiences.
- Protect the well being of older persons against any form of physical psychological and sexual abuses emanating from unrest and discontinuity during emergencies. In particular awareness raising activities should focus on the vulnerability and protection of older women in crisis situation.

Objective 3. Enhance the contribution of older persons in the rehabilitation activities of post emergency situation

Key activities

- Involve older persons at all levels in designing and implementating processes of rehabilitation programs undertaken following emergencies.

- Make use of the great role elderly can play due to the social acceptance and respect they enjoy and their extensive knowledge and experience in bringing social harmony, peace and reconciliation between the conflicting parties and stabilizing communities.

- Enable older persons recover from the economic crisis they suffer as a consequence of emergencies by designing and implementing income generation, educational and vocational training programs with special focus on elderly women.

- Design projects with the participation of older persons and implement them in collaboration with voluntary organizations that enable displaced older persons to regain properties such as land, farming tools, etc they lost and enable them settle in their original places.

Issue Number Thirteen

Protection of life and property

As human beings grow older they lose the capacity to protect themselves from violence, abuse and neglect. It is important to understand that any person is a potential victim of violence, abuse and neglect and that the effect is not only physical but also social and psychological. Sexual violence and violence against property with regard older persons are not usually reported to law enforcement bodies and therefore are not visible in most cases.

Older persons are vulnerable and exposed to fraud, abuse of property, robbery, intimidation, marginalization, and rape, deprivation of the right of inheritance, confiscation, and inhuman acts. Hence, prompt action is needed. They also need the necessary information and be protected against any type of such threat. In this connection concerned professionals are expected to identify counseling need of older persons and recovery support to the victim to the extent of bringing the culprit before the court of justice.

There are cases in which older persons are forced to live in fear and anxiety by being pressurized and intimidated by individuals who seek to inherit their properties. This problem is severe among childless or lonely elders. It is therefore essential to encourage and make aware and use the national laws that are

legislated to protect life and property to the benefit of older persons. The society is also expected to make its own

effort and contribution to prevent violence against the elderly.

Objective 1. To prevent violence against older person

Key activities

- To involve the society extensively in the crime prevention in order to protect the security of older persons.
- Reduce the fear of older persons by strengthening security activities in and around markets, religious sites, public services and other areas commonly used by older persons.
- Provide counseling and leadership training to enable older persons protects them from violence when they leave their homes for various purposes.

Objective 2. Provide the necessary legal, economic social, and psychological support to older victims of violence.

Key activities

- Create enabling environment to specially consider and legal decisions on cases of individuals that have committed violence against older persons.
- Undertake rehabilitation activities by providing social, psychological and economic support to help older victim recover from the harm and damages.

- Establish efficient and effective systems that enable and develop the practice of reporting without delay whenever violence against older person is committed.

Chapter Five

Implementation

The National Plan of Action on older persons (1998-2007 E.C) is framed to have 13 key issues based on two priority directions and detailed objectives and activities under each issue. It is only when the plan of action is put into practice that the lives of older persons can be improved. To this end it is of at most importance that implementing bodies and the community have adequate understanding about the issues of older persons. Therefore, the first step in the implementation process of the plan of action will be to undertake a comprehensive promotional works.

- Since the task is cross-cutting in its nature the responsibility and duties of actors to be involved in the execution process need to be clearly identified. In this regard government and non government organizations working in this area are expected to co-ordinate and cooperate at all levels for its implementation. An implementation manual describing the responsibilities of stakeholders is to be prepared and issued.

- It is expected from the leader and heads of executive bodies at all levels to exercise transparency and accountability in order to effectively implement the plan of action within specified period of time. Leadership has to play a decisive role to enable the

implementation process to have the quality of good governance in conjunction with the issues of the elderly.

- The community has also a decisive role in effective implementation of the activities listed in the plan of action. Without the participation of the community the provision of care and support of older persons cannot be meaningful.
- The community should be empowered to identify the problems and needs of older person and seek solutions for them. Therefore extensive promotional works are needed to improve the attitudes of women, youth and farmers association, councils, idirs, religious institutions and community leaders.
- While the government has the primary responsibility to implement the NPAOP the non government organizations, civic society organizations, the private and public sectors will play a big role for the betterment of older persons. Organizational arrangements will be set up at federal and regional level. (see Organ gram)

5.1. Federal Level

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs will assume the central responsibility to perform the coordination of activities. The office of the Ministry will have necessary qualified and motivated personnel together

with technically adequate equipment and facilities. A steering committee that will monitor the implementation process of the plan of action will be formed. The committee members will be drawn from relevant ministries and agencies, from house of peoples' representatives BOLSAs, regional national association of the elderly, public figures etc.

On the other hand a technical committee consisting of MOLSA, relevant federal ministries and agencies, national association of the elderly, the media when required, support providers from mass organizations religious and traditional social organizations, professionals in the field of ageing etc. The steering committee will be headed by the state minister of MOLSA (social sector). Head of Elderly & Disability Affairs Department will be the secretariat of the committee. The technical committee will be chaired by head of the Elderly and Disability Affairs department and its secretariat will be the team leader of Elderly Affairs. The technical committee will meet four times a year and the executive committee twice a year. Six regional states will join the meetings of the executive committee in rounds.

5.2. Regional Level

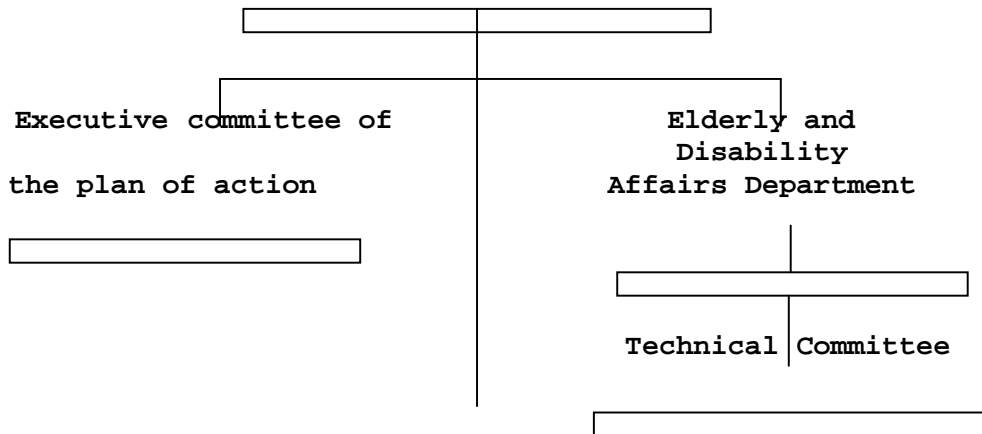
While it is obviously expected that the issues in this document are to be implemented on the basis of priorities and certain timetable depending on the financial human resource and institutional capacity of each of the regional states, overall, the organizational set up of in all regional states is as follows. Each BOLSA has the responsibility to

coordinate activities in its respective region. In this context each region will have two implementing bodies in which the regional BOLSA is the chairperson. The two implementing bodies are Regional Executive Committee and the regional technical committee. The regional Executive committee will have members drawn from regional BOLSA, regional council, relevant Bureau, older persons association at regional level and public figures. The technical committee will meet every month and the executive committee once in three months to discuss on decisive issues. The technical committee will design programs, prepare plans and gets approval from the executive committee. The regional executive committee will open channels and create partnership with the Federal Technical

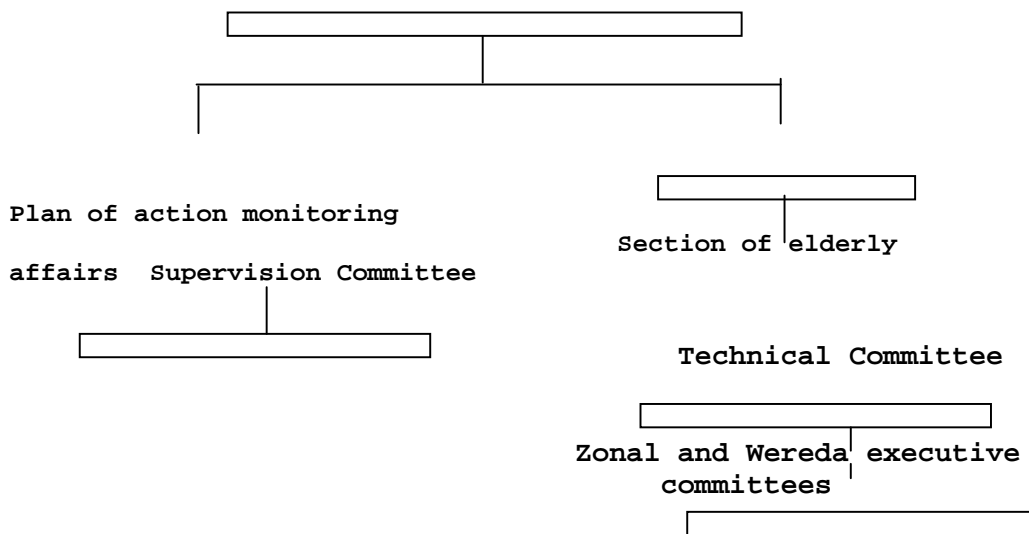
Committee. It will also form similar bodies at zonal, Wereda and Kebele levels.

**Organ gram of the executive body at Federal
and Regional Level.**

Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs



Regional Social Affairs Bureau



5.3. Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs have the responsibility to compile reports from the federal and regional implementing bodies and produce national reports. Submission of Periodic reports will follow

that of the government schedule. Reports from the relevant bodies at all level will accordingly be submitted to the regional and federal technical committees for comment and evaluation. The final report approved by the technical committees will be submitted to the biannual meeting of the executive committees. Data regarding the implementation of the plan of action will be collected and organized by the technical committees. All programs regarding meetings, workshops, seminars, symposia, and work visits are arranged by the technical committees.

The regional social affairs bureau will prepare regional reports based on performance reports from regional Bureau and other implementing bodies including zone wereda and kebele administration. The regional BOLSA will present the compiled report to the regional technical committee for comment and evaluation. The finalized regional report will further be submitted to the elderly and disability affairs Department of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. It designs and implements programs of meetings seminars and symposia.

5.4. Executive committee of the Plan of Action

- Shall prepare, distribute and promote the national implementation manual and monitors its implementation.

- Shall have the highest authority in making decisions concerning the implementation of the plan of action according to the time frame.

- Monitors and supervises to ensure that the plan of action is being implemented in the country in a coordinated and integrated manner and in line with government policies and strategies.
- Ensures, priority issues of the elderly are clearly identified.
- Collects and allocates human, material and financial resource and approves annual budget.

5.5. Responsibilities and duties of the technical committee.

- The technical committee will be on the front line to regularly lead the implementation process of the plan of action.
- The Elderly and Disability Affairs Department compiles, organizes and prepares reports collected from various Federal Regional Zonal and submit the reports to the federal technical committee for comment and evaluation. In this process the technical committee will provide professional and technical support to the department.
- Collects, organizes and disseminates information regarding the implementation.
- Prepares the budget for the year and submit to the government for approval convenes and leads meetings.

- Advises the executive committee, takes comments, opinions works jointly with regional executive bodies, and provides technical and professional support.
- Undertake promotional and awareness raising action about the plan of action.
- Prepares formats to follow-up and monitor the implementation of the plan of action.

The Developmental Social welfare Policy.

The Social Welfare Development Policy has set the following priority directions regarding older persons.

- *Appropriate social and cultural climates shall be created to ensure that society benefits from the accumulated wealth of the social and cultural experiences of the elderly as well as to assist them to adjust to changing situations in the country;*
- *All effort shall be made to strengthen and reinforce all positive elements in our culture and society, especially the integrity of the family that are aimed at guaranteeing the security and welfare of the elderly;*
- *Arrangements shall be made for the elderly without any material and psychological support to receive appropriate social security services and assistance in the communities where they live;*
- *In order to guarantee the material and social well-being of the elderly, social security programs shall be extended to groups hitherto uncovered, and appropriate laws and regulations shall be promulgated and enforced;*
- *A follow-up mechanism shall be created to ensure that services that are aimed at ensuring the security and well-being of the elderly are comprehensive; and*

- *All effort by non-governmental organizations, voluntary associations and community action-groups desiring to establish services to assist and support the elderly shall be encouraged and supported.*