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Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone +251 115 517 700 Fax: 5517844
www.africa-union.org

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STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORK AND PLAN OF ACTION
ON AGEING

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AU	Africa Union
ACHPR	Africa Commission on Human and People's Rights
ACHPRPWDs	Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
OPOs	Older Persons Organisations
G & E	Gender and Equity
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
ILO	International Labour Organisation
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation

REC	Regional Economic Communities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound
UN	United Nations
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission of Africa
WHO	World Health Organisation

PREAMBLE

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (the Assembly),

Guided by the principles enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Charter of the United Nations;

Noting that the 2000 Constitutive Act of the African Union identifies respect for democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law and good governance as essential principles for the proper functioning of the African Union;

Recognising the equality and value of all older persons in all their heterogeneity and the diversity of their lived realities, disabilities, impairments, experiences, opportunities, perspectives and choices as full members of society;

Further recalling that the rights of those living in the most vulnerable situations, including persons with disabilities, were recognised in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the succeeding Sustainable Development Goals;

Acknowledging that older persons have inherent dignity and individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices;

Further acknowledging the will and preferences of older persons through their full and active participation and inclusion in society;

Concerned that older persons continue to experience human rights violations, systemic discrimination, social exclusion and prejudice within political, social and economic spheres;

Recognising that families, guardians and caregivers play essential roles in the lives of older persons and that they should be supported in such;

Concerned that effective and adequate measures have not been taken to ensure that older persons may exercise their full rights on an equal basis with others;

Noting with appreciation the contributions of civil society, particularly Older Persons Organisations and their families, to the progress achieved, including through continuous awareness-raising of the rights of older persons, innovation of good practices, and engagement in policy influence;

Further noting with concern the disproportionate impact on older persons in Africa of armed conflicts and other emergencies including natural disasters, health epidemics, and climate change impacts;

Determined that the rights and dignity of older persons should be promoted, protected and ensured to enable them to enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms entirely on an equal basis with other.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SECTION A: CONTEXT

A1. RATIONALE

1. Africa is and will, for the foreseeable future, remain demographically the youngest of all world regions. Its large population share of children and youth represents a key promise for the continent's future. At the same time – and while the proportion of older persons in Africa's population will remain below ten percent in coming decades – their absolute number will grow extraordinarily rapidly: faster than in any other major world region.
2. Depending on context, older age is defined by biological, social or psychological attributions. Defined by chronological age as those aged 60 years and above, the number of older persons – already 74 million in 2020 – is projected to near triple to 216 million by 2050. By 2030 alone the continent will be home to an additional 30 million older persons. Not dissimilar projections emerge when using an alternative criterion to define an older person: 15 years of remaining life expectancy.
3. This ageing of Africa's population is, and must be recognised as, another key marker of the continent's unique demography and the potential inherent in it.
4. Africa now faces the urgent challenge and opportunity to forge practices, systems, institutions and legal and policy environments that can serve the needs, and harness the capacities of present and future cohorts of older people, in support of the continent's overall development aspirations.
5. Over the past two decades Member States have taken crucial steps toward recognizing and addressing the need for action on ageing and older populations.
6. In 2002, the adoption of first African Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing (AUPFPAA) captured the spectrum of then recognised issues related to ageing in the continent, proposed solutions to them – and stimulated a steady expansion of debate on ageing in the continent.
7. Since then a still small, but growing number of Member States have, individually, developed important national policies, legal provisions or institutional structures, as well as sector-specific strategies or programming on ageing and older persons.
8. Collectively, Member States' have made key and bold commitments to upholding the rights of older persons through their adoption in 2016 of a Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Older Persons.

9. Collective policy directions have been set out in Common Africa Positions on long-term care systems (2017), and in an AU Position on the value of investments in Africa's older population to advance a demographic dividend (2019).
10. Despite such advances, the realization of comprehensive, cross-sectoral responses on ageing and older persons remains patchy. Too often action on older persons is viewed as detracting from investments in young people or other core areas, and is deprioritised.
11. One barrier to progress is the absence of a strategic and forward-looking policy framework that clarifies the case -, and sets out critical priority directions for investments in older populations, as part of-and contributory to Member States' efforts to achieve their overall social and economic development objectives.
12. Such a fit-for-purpose framework must take into account the immense change in social, economic, physical, environmental, cultural and political contexts and available technologies that has unfolded since 2002; the consolidated continental and global policy- and legal architecture; the accumulated body of relevant scientific knowledge on ageing and older populations in Africa; and learning derived from existing ageing responses forged in the continent.
13. Last but not least, a framework must allow for other major trends and events impacting Africa, such as climate change, migration, urbanization, infrastructure development, conflict and disasters including the recent COVID19 crisis, the recovery from which will be a foremost challenge for the coming years.

A2. STRATEGIC VISION

14. The strategic vision of the framework builds on the continent's overall vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena. The strategic objectives of this framework are three-fold:
15. First, is an unshakeable recognition of the worth and inherent dignity of Africa's older persons and a commitment to upholding their human rights and freedoms underpinned by the entry into force of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa.
16. Second, is a firm and indelible realization that investments in ageing and older populations are **not** separate from, marginal to, or detracting from objectives to enhance the prospects of children-, youth- and women in pursuit of social and economic development.
17. Rather, strategic investments across the life course to enhance capacities and well-being in older age can benefit both older and younger people today and in future as well as foster cohesive and prosperous societies.
18. This is because such investments can harness the linked lives of old and young, and the intergenerational influences that older persons wield on the exposures, opportunities and perspectives of young people, at family- and community- and societal levels. Moreover, investments in capacities and well-being in later life have the potential to leverage older people's latent transformative assets: their experience and generativity.
19. Third, building on the first two, is the widespread pursuit of comprehensive investments to adapt existing or forge new social, health, political and economic systems and structures to enhance the capacities, engagement and well-being of all older people. Developed in conjunction with older people themselves, such systems and structures are designed to:

- i. eliminate ageism and age-based discrimination and exclusion in later life;
- ii. reduce key vulnerabilities and eliminate inequalities within the older population;
- iii. optimize mental, physical and psycho-social functioning over the life course, and to
- iv. recognise, support and harness older people's intergenerational roles and influences.

A3. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

20. This policy document provides the AU and its agencies, the regional economic commissions, all African Member States and other stakeholders with strategic directions for making the case for, and for formulating strategic priority responses on ageing and older persons at all levels and across sectors, as an integral part of core development efforts.
21. The framework further provides a point of reference for:
 - i. The engagement of stakeholder constituencies, including but not limited to older persons, younger generations, civil society organisations, UN agencies, donor agencies and academia, invested in the design of research and knowledge generation geared to fully understanding and addressing the challenges and opportunities of ageing in the continent;
 - ii. Multistakeholder and intersectoral exchange and learning at and across community, sub-national, national and REC-levels;
 - iii. The forging of partnerships and relationships, or resource mobilisation, for working with the AU, RECs and Member States toward harnessing ageing for the continent's future.
22. As such, the framework represents a key African contribution to both the Decade of Action on Healthy Ageing (2020-2030) and the broader overall Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development (2020-2030).

SECTION B: GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND CROSS-CUTTING APPROACHES

1. Africa is a diverse continent and her people grow old in a variety of settings. Recognising the foundational importance of gender in shaping later life experiences it is important to acknowledge the marked diversity and disparities in status, opportunities, abilities, capacities, well-being and life expectancy that exist within the older population. While many older people live in poverty and ill-health across the region, others enjoy wealth, influence or robust health. Despite and precisely because of this huge diversity, a number of critical cross-cutting approaches need to be brought to bear on the development and translation of responses across all strategic action areas:

B1. HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

2. All actions and approaches recommended in this policy framework should promote, protect and respect the human rights and freedoms of older persons – and adhere to the principles of universality, indivisibility, equality and non-discrimination,

participation, accountability, as committed to by African Member States in key continental and international conventions and instruments, notably in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and its Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons.

Key approaches

- a) Sign, ratify and implement in full the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Older Persons and establish a strong framework to track its implementation
- b) Develop the capacities of both 'duty-bearers' to meet their obligations, and 'rights-holders' to claim their rights, including through independent reviews of government performance and clear accountability, complaint and grievance mechanisms.
- c) Ensure the right to effective, including judicial remedy, and guarantee equal access to justice, including through the provision of legal aid,

B2. RECOGNISE AND REDRESS INEQUITIES

3. Across all strategic action areas in this framework, it is critical that efforts are made to identify and understand existing intersecting inequities in relevant outcomes, along gender, disability, age or other lines -- and to ensure that responses are designed to redress such disparities.

Key approaches

- d) Across action areas, examine, document and analyse the nature and extent of relevant intersecting age, gender, disability and other social inequities in relevant outcomes
- e) Across action areas, ensure that legal, policy and programmatic responses are developed and resourced so as to redress relevant social inequities ensuring that the most marginalised groups are prioritised

B3. INCLUDE AND CENTRE OLDER PEOPLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESPONSES ON AGEING

4. Across all strategic action areas in this framework, it is critical that the perspectives of older persons are centred in the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of- and the reporting on responses.

B4. SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

1. Africa looks to families and their communities as key social groups in which older people's lives unfold and which challenges and opportunities of later life are to be understood. At the same time – and whilst recognising the strain on families' capacities and resources – Africa looks to families and communities as a strength upon which development in the continent can and must build.

The development of responses on ageing and older persons across all strategic areas, ought therefore, consider where and how existing family and community arrangements and initiatives

can be leveraged and built upon. This must ensure that the capacities and resources of communities and families across contexts are adequately supported to respond to the needs and be responsive to the will and preferences of older persons.

Key Approaches

- a) Develop a robust and grounded understanding of the heterogeneity in African family forms, circumstances and dynamics and the experiences of individuals within them; of the norms and values that underpin families and communities; and of the resources and capacities that families and communities draw upon
- b) Map and draw lessons from existing family- and community-based responses on ageing and older persons
- c) Establish and sustain stakeholder-engagement mechanisms and platforms to ensure that families and communities are included in the development of responses on ageing and older persons
- d) Ensure adequate resourcing, including through social protection, to support the capacities of families and communities as part of ageing-focused responses

B5. HARNESSING THE POTENTIAL OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES

2. Africa is seeing an exponential growth in the penetration and acceptance of information and communications technology (ICT) – with mobile technologies now the largest technological platform in the continent. Older persons are both active agents- as well as potential beneficiaries of ICT utilization and interventions and these technologies can play an important role in the forging of responses on ageing.
3. Older people often lack access to or are excluded from the optimal use of digital technologies. This can aggravate and multiply their existing disadvantages.
4. Efforts to build on ICT in such responses need to consider and address digital divides between old and young and within the older population. These divides reflect different cultures, with various levels of technology-related comfort, acceptance, and skills among successive generations and cohorts of older persons, and will be perpetuated as new technologies are continuously introduced. At the same time, the use of ICT can represent an opportunity to foster intra- and inter-generational connections.

Key Approaches

- a) Map, draw lessons learned from existing policy or programmatic responses to enhance ICT access or use among older people or across generations
- b) Build acceptable, affordable, culturally-appropriate and accessible ICT interventions and programmes for older people
- c) Consider inter- and intra-generational perspectives in planning, designing and operationalising ICT interventions for older persons.
- d) Develop, implement and monitor ICT policies and interventions that enable older people to acquire ICT skills, which are accessible, affordable, appropriate and could be optimised in inter- and intra-generational programming.
- e) Allocate adequate resources and infrastructure to ensure ICT that is universally accessible and appropriate for older people.

B6. EXPANDING SOCIAL PROTECTION

5. In Social Agenda 2063, Africa recognises the right to social protection across the lifecycle. Ensuring access to social protection is both an economic and a social imperative: necessary for promoting inclusive and people driven sustainable development that will reduce poverty and inequalities and generate resilience against future shocks.
6. Entitlement to a basic package of social protection for older persons and families is critical for guaranteeing dignity and other human rights through access to essential health care, social insurance, social welfare, basic social services and income security
7. While a growing number of Member States are establishing new- or expanding existing social protection schemes, these often remain limited in coverage and narrow in scope – mostly focused on social pensions whose levels are typically insufficient to meet basic needs
8. An expansion of social protection measures, therefore, needs to be integral to the development of responses across the strategic action areas (below) on adapting health systems, developing long-term care systems, guaranteeing safety and security, ensuring adequate income security, access to learning and education and to adequate housing.

Key Approaches

- a) Develop new or improve existing social protection policies and legislation to ensure that a fully adequate basic package of social protection for all older persons is provided for, and that particular vulnerabilities, for example through disabilities, are appropriately addressed to ensure equality across diverse groups

- b) Expand the coverage and focus of existing old age-focused social protection schemes to include, in addition to income security, universal health coverage, access to long-term care, ensuring safety and security, access to education and learning and access to adequate housing.
- c) Improve the governance, financing and administration and ensure the adequate resourcing of social protection schemes
- d) Establish and sustain effective coordination structure, management and information system such as a single registry- and an accountability mechanism for all social protection programmes

B7. HARNESSING THE INTERSECTION OF AGEING WITH OTHER MAJOR DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL TRENDS

- 9. In addition to population ageing, Africa is experiencing a set of other major demographic, social and environmental trends, key among which are migration and displacement, urbanization and the growth of urban slums, climate change and emergencies as well as their implications for rural development. Older people are affected by- and at the same time, can shape the form of, and responses to these critical concerns.
- 10. The integration of responses on these trends with responses on ageing and older persons is vitally important, therefore: Ageing must be applied as a lens to inform responses across each of the critical concerns and, vice versa, consideration of migration, urbanization, climate change, emergencies and rural development must inform the development of responses on ageing.

Key Approaches

- a) Develop a robust understanding of how challenges and opportunities of ageing and older populations intersect with, and are relevant to addressing, issues of migration, urbanisation, climate change, emergencies and rural development
- b) Map and assess the inclusion of a focus on ageing and older persons across existing responses on migration, urbanisation, climate change, emergencies and rural development.
- c) Establish and sustain inter-sectoral engagement mechanisms to ensure that responses to migration, urbanisation, climate change, emergencies and rural development include ageing-focused solutions that are adequately planned, resourced, implemented and monitored

SECTION C: STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

C1. ADAPTING AND ENSURING ACCESS TO HEALTH SYSTEMS

- 11. Africa's health systems remain oriented to the needs of younger age-groups – including maternal, newborn and child health, infectious diseases, and the primary prevention of the most prominent non-communicable diseases through lifestyle-

related behavioural changes. The responsiveness of health care services to the more chronic and complex health problems and priority health needs of older people remains minimal

12. At the same time older persons face geographical, physical financial, technology-related and other barriers to accessing health care, as well as obstacles related to conditions in health facilities and ageist attitudes on the part of health workers.
13. Action is needed to align health systems to the needs of older populations within the context of Universal Health Coverage. The overall aim must be to remove access barriers and provide services that maintain or enhance older persons’ ‘intrinsic’ physical, mental and psychosocial capacities and prevent care dependence.
14. This requires a shift away from a purely clinical, disease detection and treatment focus toward the provision of tailor-made services that address older people’s multidimensional needs in an integrated and person and relation-centred way that supports older persons’ ability for self-care. Anchored in a strong case management system, such services must be able to:
 - i. Recognize, prevent and manage, including through rehabilitation, impairments and geriatric syndromes;
 - ii. detect and address early markers of declines in capacity; and
 - iii. treat key chronic conditions of older age such as musculoskeletal and sensory impairments; cardiovascular disease and risk factors such as hypertension and diabetes; mental disorders, dementia and cognitive declines.

Recommended Actions

- a) Design and introduce an essential package of integrated health services, drawing, on relevant African approaches, that build on strong case management to address the multifaceted needs and optimise the physical and mental capacities of older persons across primary, secondary and tertiary levels.
- b) Develop or expand community outreach systems to promote the delivery of services to older persons in their homes; to enhance older persons’ health literacy and their participation in the design and monitoring of services
- c) Improve physical environments and management systems and procedures within health facilities to ensure that they are ‘age friendly’, that is, assure older persons’ access to all services, amenities and options
 - d) Allocate adequate resources to maintain the delivery of such services, and introduce dedicated social protection and other measures to ensure older people’s financial and physical access to them.
- d) Establish and sustain structures to develop, expand, maintain and manage an appropriately trained health workforce with requisite skills in geriatric care and other relevant areas of ageing focused expertise.

C2. DEVELOPING LONG-TERM CARE SYSTEMS

- 15.** The number of older people who are no longer able to live independently without the assistance of others and who require care and support is set to rise. Aligned with African family values, most long-term care (LTC) for such older people is thus far provided by families – mainly by unpaid female family carers, as public LTC service or support provisioning remains limited.
- 16.** Within contexts of poverty, migration and other strains, indications point to i) widespread deficits in the adequacy and quality of LTC that families are able to provide with consequences for the well-being and dignity of the older care recipient and ii) negative impacts of LTC provision on family resources and on the health, social and economic opportunities of female family carers.
- 17.** A clear need and demand for accessible organised LTC provision and support services exists, and an as yet small but expanding organised LTC sector, including a variety of models, is evolving in a largely organic, uncoordinated manner. However, the dominance, thus far, of for-profit care providers or charitable services for the most vulnerable, as well as the clustering of services in urban metropolitan areas, mean that access to organised care and support services remains restricted to a small minority.
- 18.** Action is needed to expand home-grown, sustainable and equitable systems of organised LTC provision and support – to sustain, supplement or, where no alternative exists, ~~needed~~ substitute for the care provided by families —while at the same time reducing gender inequalities and offering an important area of employment creation for Africa’s youth as part of a LTC economy.
- 19.** Such an expansion of organised LTC provisioning must ensure adequate training, and decent employment conditions for care workers, and establish robust mechanisms to assure the quality of care provided, as well as its coordination with health care provision. Innovative models of accessible community-, home- or institution-based LTC provision that have begun to emerge in various African settings and that retain a key involvement of families offer potential approaches to build upon.

Recommended Actions

- a) Develop a full understanding of the present arrangements, experiences, impacts, needs, expectations and underlying norms and values of LTC provision and receipt across contexts
- b) Establish cross-sectoral national coordination and stakeholder engagement mechanisms and develop national plans to guide the development of a home-grown system of organised equitable and sustainable long-term care service or support provisioning
- c) Map, draw learnings from, and build on innovative African models of organised community- and home-based as well as institutional care provision that retain a key involvement of families

- d) Allocate adequate resources to sustain such service or support provisioning and introduce social protection measures to ensure older people's and their families' access to them
- e) Establish and adequately resource systems to develop, maintain and manage an appropriately trained national long-term care workforce
- f) Establish and adequately resource a system with monitoring and oversight mechanisms, to develop and enforce consistent and robust quality standards of LTC provision

C3. INVESTING IN OLDER PEOPLE'S INTERGENERATIONAL ROLES

- 20. Older people are typically – but erroneously - considered irrelevant to the achievement of child- and youth-driven social and economic progress and the achievement of a first demographic dividend. Yet, an intergenerational perspective reveals that older persons are directly relevant to, and constitute a potential resource for driving such broader development. Their relevance arises from the intergenerational positions and functions older persons already assume within families and communities and from potential new societal roles they might play.
- 21. In Africa's communities, older persons hold positions, among others, as elders, traditional or religious leaders; as farmers, land-owners or decision makers especially in smallholder agriculture. In often extended families, older persons assume roles as family- or household- heads or elders; as carers, guardians, or minders of young children, as recipients of long-term care from younger, mainly female kin, or as contributors of income and material support to younger generations.
- 22. Through these existing roles, older persons' shape – negatively, directly or indirectly– the exposures and opportunities of children and younger adults, and thus their future capacities. Limitations in older persons' functioning, capacities or resources mean that their intergenerational influences are often not as favourable as they could or should be.
- 23. Investments to enhance older person's health, knowledge, income security and access to long-term care services can help maximise their positive and minimise their negative intergenerational impacts on the future prospects of younger people.
- 24. Similarly, establishing new societal-level intergenerational mentoring programmes to harness the experience and skills of the growing number of senior or retired professionals or entrepreneurs could help enhance the capabilities of children and youth.

Recommended Actions

- a) Galvanize wider debate on, and capture in national population and development frameworks, the relevance of older persons to the achievement of a first demographic dividend.
- b) pursue responses to enhance older person's health, knowledge, decent work, income security and access to long-term care services as an integral part of strategies to nurture the capabilities of children and youth,
- d) Establish and adequately resource in public contexts- and encourage in the private sector, new platforms and mechanisms for inter-generational mentoring that deploy the experience and skills of older persons whilst enabling two-way exchange.
- e) Capture relevant traditions and knowledge held by current cohorts of older persons and encourage consideration of this potential resource by all generations

C4. ELIMINATING AND ADDRESSING ELDER ABUSE

- 25. Older persons have the right to safety and a life free from all forms of elder abuse. These include financial, physical, sexual, and psychological mistreatment, exploitation, violence and neglect, as well as harmful traditional practices and abuses of older women related to property and land rights, and any form of abandonment or negligence of older people that takes place within the family or that is perpetrated or tolerated by the State, its institutions or agents, regardless of where it occurs.
- 26. Nonetheless, older people do experience such elder abuse – even though it often remains invisible and robust data on its scope, contexts and drivers is scarce. In addition, and partly as a result of the lack of data, awareness of- and reporting mechanisms for elder abuse and support services for victims remain limited, while legal, administrative and programmatic systems to prevent, investigate, punish and eradicate elder abuse are insufficiently developed.

Recommended Actions

- a) Put in place measures to foster awareness of, and the ability to recognise and identify the various forms of elder abuse among health and social care professionals, domestic workers, carers, other people offering services for older people and the public.
- b) Provide information and formal reporting mechanisms to enable and encourage relevant professionals, service providers, family or community members, the public and older people themselves to respond to- and report cases of elder abuse
- c) Establish new or strengthen existing, and ensure universal access to, cross-sectoral services to support victims of elder abuse
- d) Ensure access to justice by adopting appropriately resourced and accessible legislative, administrative and other measures to prevent, investigate, punish and eradicate acts of elder abuse in both private and public spheres

- e) Improve capacity to collect, disaggregate, analyse, utilise and make public relevant, routine information and statistical data – on prevalence, trends, risk factors, perpetrators and access to support services, remedies and redress – for all forms of violence, abuse and neglect among all age cohorts.

C5. ENSURING ADEQUATE INCOME SECURITY

- 27. Pension schemes, and the income security they provide, can have a transformative impact for older people and their families in enhancing dignity, independence and food security, and facilitating access to basic services particularly health care and education.
- 28. Yet, a majority of Africa's older persons, in particular older women, still do not have access to a pension. Only a small minority receives contributory pensions based on formal employment as a vast majority of employment in Africa continues to be in the informal sector. At the same time, the coverage of non-contributory or 'social' pensions remain limited
- 29. Even where social pensions are in place, their levels are typically insufficient to meet basic needs, whilst challenges in their governance, access and accountability can undermine the income security older people derive from them.

Recommended Actions

- a) Map and draw lessons learned from existing old age income security policies and schemes operating in Africa
- b) Recognise older persons' right to social pensions in national laws and policies
- c) Establish new, or expand existing social pension schemes, ensuring universal coverage and benefit levels that are fully adequate to meet basic needs
- d) Improve the governance of social pension schemes and ensure that the processes and procedures of accessing them are decentralised, dignified, simple and safe.
- f) Establish and adequately resource monitoring and accountability mechanisms that are fully responsive to older beneficiaries
- e) Develop adequate and effective contributory old age income security schemes for informal sector workers

C6. ELIMINATING AGE-BASED DISCRIMINATION

- 35. Older persons, regardless of their abilities, gender, beliefs, capacities or socio-economic status have the right to be treated equally before the law and the right to be protected against discrimination in public life, including in the labour market.
- 36. While some older people, by virtue of their status, enjoy inclusion, power and influence, others continue to experience systemic discrimination, social exclusion and prejudice

within political, social and economic spheres. Such discrimination can, among others, impose barriers to, or exclusion from lifelong learning opportunities, participation in governance processes, and accessing financial services, justice and health care.

37. Responses are needed to eliminate age-based discrimination of older people and to counter the ageist attitudes that underpin it.

Recommended Actions

- a) Enact new, or strengthen existing age equality and non-discrimination legislation across political, social and economic spheres, with particular focus on groups, such as women, older persons living with disability or migrants that might experience multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination, and with explicit and inclusive implementation, monitoring, reporting and enforcement measures
- b) Abolish existing laws, policies and practices that are age discriminatory, including age limits and exceptions to the rule of age equality
- c) Establish and roll out mechanisms for older persons to submit complaints and request reparation for the denial of right to non-discrimination on the basis of their age
- d) Design awareness raising outreach programmes to counteract ageist attitudes

C7 ENSURING ACCESS TO ADEQUATE HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

38. The right to adequate housing and access to infrastructure such as transportation, basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity, recreation and information and communication technologies and systems, is a key component of rights to an acceptable standard of living and non-discrimination. The type of housing within which older people live and the infrastructure they have access to have direct impacts on their well-being - through tangible effects such as access to basic utilities as well as intangible factors, including a sense of belonging.
39. Insecure housing and lack of access to infrastructure among older people often reflect intersecting effects, for example of income poverty, disability and gender but can also be shaped by factors such as inheritance rights, elder abuse, migration, health and disability status

Recommended Actions

- a) Develop a robust understanding of the heterogeneity of experiences, challenges and impacts of housing, homelessness and access to infrastructure in older age
- b) Map and draw lessons learned from existing policy or programmatic responses to develop adequate housing or expand access to infrastructure for older persons
- c) Aligned with universal design principles, build adequate, affordable, accessible, resource efficient, safe, resilient, well-connected, and well-located housing and

accessible infrastructure across rural and urban contexts that are responsive to evolving needs as people age and can foster social integration.

- d) Develop new or improve existing policies and legislation that incorporate the entitlement to and provision of adequate housing for all older persons that takes into account their preferences.

C8. SUPPORT OLDER PEOPLE'S ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL AND GOVERNANCE PROCESSES

- 40. Older persons have the right to participate in social and cultural life building on their right to freedom of expression, representation, association and to information about, and engagement in public decision making processes.
- 41. However, the participation of older people in public discourses and decision making processes remains limited and their voice often muted. Among others, this reflects a lack of mechanisms or platforms to amplify the collective voice of older people and ensure their involvement in public processes, as well as the small number of, and insufficient coordination among civil society organisation representing older people.

Recommended Actions

- a) Abolish laws that restrict-, and actively support the establishment of, civil society forums or platforms to foster and amplify the collective voice of older people
- b) Establish and adequately resource mechanisms to ensure the participation of older persons in public policy discourses and decision-making processes based on progressive African values.

C9. ENSURE ACCESS TO LEARNING AND EDUCATION IN LATER LIFE

- 42. Access to adult learning and education is recognised as an essential element of the right to education. Increasing longevity expands opportunities for attaining basic and advanced education and skills in adulthood and for capitalizing on these to foster inclusive, equitable, tolerant, sustainable and knowledge-based societies.
- 43. Lifelong learning is understood as encompassing all forms of education, based on inclusive, emancipatory, humanistic and democratic values. Literacy, including digital literacy, as well as language comprehension, are the most significant foundations upon which to build comprehensive, inclusive and integrated lifelong and life-wide learning. – Spanning a continuum ranging from formal to non-formal to informal education; such learning is an essential requirement for strengthening older persons' capabilities to cope with the evolving challenges and complexities of life, culture, economy and society.
- 44. Yet, many older people, especially women, given cumulative disadvantages over their life course still lack literacy, while access to all forms of learning and education in later life remains minimal.

Recommended Actions

- a) Map and draw lessons from existing ageing-sensitive adult education and lifelong learning responses
- b) Develop new, or improve existing, and implement and monitor policies and legislative measures to ensure access to comprehensive and inclusive, ageing-sensitive adult education
- c) Allocate adequate resources and expertise to provide ageing-sensitive and context-relevant adult education, including basic education, and ICT training programmes with greater scale, range, coverage to ensure access for all older people.
- d) Foster the quality, responsiveness and relevance of old ageing-focused adult education by co-developing with older people quality criteria for curricula, learning materials and teaching methodologies, including intragenerational peer-to-peer learning

C10. FOSTERING AFRICA-CENTRED RESEARCH AND TRAINING ON AGEING AND LATER LIFE

45. Increased capacities for, and the expanded generation of locally relevant evidence and knowledge on ageing are critical for informing the development of policy and programmatic responses across all strategic action areas above; and for ensuring that African institutions and scholars take their rightful place in shaping debates on ageing in the continent and globally.
46. An expansion of requisite knowledge and skills among relevant professionals and practitioners but also among policy makers and planners across health, social and economic sectors is critically important for the effective planning and implementation of ageing-response.

Recommended Actions

- a) Ensure the development and inclusion of ageing-focused curriculum modules or dedicated courses in tertiary education and training across all relevant disciplines and study areas
- b) Allocate resources to nurture the development of a critical mass of African scholars and academic experts on ageing and an expansion of Africa-led research on ageing in the continent
- c) Establish the collection, analysis and reporting of ageing-relevant and sufficiently age-disaggregated data as part of routine national surveys and administrative information gathering.
- d) Ensure the establishment and facilitation of sub-regional or continental training and capacity strengthening hubs on ageing for policy makers, planners, professionals and practitioners

C11 ENABLING YOUNGER PEOPLE TO PREPARE FOR LATER LIFE

47. Aging is a process that starts at birth and ends at death. Capacities, well-being and conditions and inequalities in older age are influenced by differential choices, experiences and exposures earlier in life. In addition to broader efforts to enhance the opportunities and capabilities of Africa's young people it is important that efforts are made to enable them to prepare for, and shape prospects for their own later life. Fostering young people's awareness and understanding of older age and constructive attitudes toward older persons is key for preparing their future. It is equally important for positive intergenerational engagement in the present.

Recommended Actions

- a) Develop training on issues of ageing, older persons and ageism for children and youth in primary, secondary and tertiary education and for those outside of formal education.
- b) Include training on the longer term life-course effects of unhealthy lifestyles through health promotion for younger adults
- c) Engage younger adults on the value of, and opportunities and mechanisms for saving and financial preparation for later life
- d) Provide support to middle-aged adults on preparing and planning for all aspects of retirement.
- e) Encourage younger people's engagement in intergenerational activities and learning with older persons
- f) Stimulate and engage the media, the public and private sector, civil society and academia in a national conversation on our ageing futures.

SECTION D: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS

48. While the AU and its Member States bear the primary responsibility to operationalise the Policy Framework, other public and private stakeholders contribute skills and knowledge to mainstream ageing into multi-sectoral development, planning and implementation processes, at all levels, as per national plans and priorities for the advancement of the rights and inclusion of older persons.
49. There is a need to document and compile a compendium of professional older persons in order to tap into their capacities and the demographic dividend.

D1: African Union Commission

50. For purposes of supporting the implementation of this Policy Framework, the AU's roles and responsibilities are:
- a) Review all existing AU policies, programmes and budgets to ensure they are all ageing-inclusive in the spirit of the Africa Union Ageing Protocol and International Plan of Action on Ageing;

- b) Set up an Advisory Council on Ageing as an ad hoc mechanism with the help of Member States, to facilitate the implementation and follow up of the continental policies, budgets and plans on ageing;
- c) Promote and disseminate the **Strategic** Policy Framework as widely as possible. Sensitise the Member States, the international donor community, the private sector and CSOs about the need to adopt the **Strategic** Policy Framework and implement it;
- d) Allocate budgets and mobilise resources from development partners, private sector, and Africans in the diaspora for implementation of objectives of the Policy Framework, including for capacity building of AU organs, RECs and the Member States;
- e) Develop monitoring and evaluation data collection tools for the Member States and collaborate with the government of each Member State for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the Policy Framework, and to find solutions where there are challenges;
- f) Receive biennial reports from the Member States; review the reports and assess the status of implementation of the critical recommendations of the **Strategic** Policy Framework including factors and issues contributing to, or affecting the implementation process;
- g) Involve continental NGOs, Organisations of Older Persons, and CSOs, including human rights bodies, DPOs and individual persons with disabilities in the implementation of the **Strategic** Policy Framework and mobilisation of resources;
- h) Report on the implementation of the **Strategic** Policy Framework to the relevant AU policy organs, including the Conference of Ministers of Social Development, the Executive Council and the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on a biennial basis;
- i) Prepare a comprehensive mid-term evaluation report on the implementation of the **Strategic** Policy Framework at the end of every five years.

D2: Other AU Organs

- 51. AU Organs (e.g. The African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights; the Pan-African Parliament, The African Court of Justice):
 - a) Accord high priority to the **Strategic** Policy Framework on their agenda, include ageing-inclusive budgeting and programming and play critical roles in implementing the key recommendations in collaboration with all the AU Departments of Social Affairs;
 - b) Propose a decision for AU Heads of State and Government to appoint a Special Rapporteur on Ageing with adequate capacity to reach all AU regions to ensure implementation, monitoring and reporting of the implementation of the Policy Framework;

D3. Member States

- a) Use the **Strategic** Policy Framework as the critical guiding framework to develop, where these do not exist, and review, specific national laws, policies and budgets on ageing inclusion that clearly outline objectives, milestones, time-frames, the roles and obligations of all stakeholders, and how to mobilise resources;
- b) Sign and Ratify the Africa Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' on the Rights of Older in Africa
- c) Closely work with OPOs, and other collaborating partners in formulating and implementing all policies relating to ageing, thereby ensuring that they genuinely address the needs of older persons;
- d) Establish a National Ageing Coordination mechanism where none exists to promote inter-sectoral coordination and effective implementation of the Policy Framework;
- e) Build the capacity of personnel working on ageing issues in the various sectors of government to enhance effective implementation of this Policy Framework;
- f) Collate national data on ageing, improve gaps in data regarding ageing in rural areas and facilitate information sharing to all stakeholders;
- g) Develop monitoring and evaluation Policy Frameworks for each of the strategic areas of the **Strategic** Policy Framework and develop reliable targets and Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART) and verifiable indicators in the monitoring and evaluation strategies able to respond to local contexts, needs and concerns;
- h) Prepare periodic progress reports on implementation; supporting the development of coherent continental, regional and national monitoring mechanisms in synergy, as appropriate, with other relevant mechanisms for sustainable development;
- i) Ensure that advocacy and awareness raising strategies on ageing inclusion are developed and implemented together with OPOs, and NGOs at the national and regional levels, and with sufficient budget for it;
- j) Ensure that national statistical agencies collect and use relevant data and evidence to understand and address the scale, and nature, of challenges that older persons face, using tested tools to inform evidence-based ageing-inclusive development planning;
- k) Provide adequate national budgets as the primary source of funding for ageing inclusion to the agencies mandated with the different aspects of implementation and across all sectors;
- l) Strengthen and support research on ageing and share best practice experiences and models with other African countries;

D4. Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

- 52. RECs achieve regional level implementation and coordination by all ministerial clusters and internal structures as follows:

- a) Include ageing in their development policies and budgets, planning and programming at all levels in their internal structures and all sectors;
- b) Promote the implementation of age-inclusive strategies and programmes by establishing a regional coordinating mechanism and focal points, and preparing programmes for resource mobilisation to support national and regional efforts;
- c) Provide strategic guidance to the Member States, facilitating the implementation of the regional strategies and programmes in line with the Africa Union Ageing Protocol, and coordination, particularly concerning inter-State interventions;
- d) Allocate adequate resources to the agencies mandated with the different aspects of the implementation of this Policy Framework.

D5. Older Persons Organisations,

53. OPOs fulfil the role of technical experts and advisors on all matters concerning ageing, and:

- a) Acquaint themselves with the provision of this **Strategic** Policy Framework and the policy-making processes in their respective countries;
 - b) Play an active advocacy and lobbying role in raising awareness on the **Strategic** Policy Framework and its implementation;
 - c) Work in collaboration with the AU Commission and the Member States to promote, disseminate and implement the Policy Framework;
 - d) Undertake independent analyses of progress and lessons learnt and subsequently provide relevant and up to date information to the Member States and also for submission to the AU Commission;
 - e) Mobilise constituencies to engage with governments and stakeholders to understand the rights and needs of older persons;
 - f) Represent the concerns of older persons at international, continental, regional and national levels;
- g) Participate in the monitoring of the rights of older persons along with National Human Rights Institutions in line with the provisions of the African Union Ageing Protocol as well as national human rights instruments;

D6. CSOs and other non-state actors (CSOs, Donors, UN agencies, the private sector, community leaders, faith-based organisations, academia, and media)

54. CSOs, Donors, UN Agencies and the Private Sector have primarily been in the forefront in addressing rights, for example, education, health, equality and freedom from discrimination. These are critical to people's survival and development as well as to the fulfilment of their full potential. They should:

- a) Disseminate the plan to all implementing partners, government agencies, donors, and other stakeholders;
- b) Help to cultivate the capacity of OPOs by: supporting group formation, organisational and skills development through provision of information, training, mentoring and funding; brokering to assist ageing groups in finding and accessing the right support, trainers, funders and information; and accompanying organisations as they gain capacity;
- c) Provide coordinated technical and financial support dedicated to financing the various elements of the **Strategic** Policy Framework and strengthening the capacity of the AUC, the RECs, Member States and CSOs to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Framework;
- d) Academic and research institutions to focus on increasing research for local application and support action by communities and local authorities to create linkages between policy and practice for effective decision making.