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ETHIOPIAN HUMAN  
RIGHTS COMMISSION

**Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (Affiliate Status No.  
18)**

**AGENDA ITEM 10**

**Activity Report of the Working Group on Older Persons and  
Persons with Disabilities in Africa**

***Update on the human rights situation of older persons and  
persons with disabilities in Ethiopia***

**73<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and  
Peoples' Rights**

***20 October – 09 November 2022***

***Banjul, The Gambia***

## *Introduction*

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is pleased to address the Working Group on the Rights of Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities in Africa (the Working Group) of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Commission,) on the human rights situation of older persons and persons with disabilities in Ethiopia. Disability rights and the rights of older persons are key priority areas for EHRC which is striving to mainstream and promote these rights in its human rights protection and promotion work.

## *EHRC work*

In the period between May and September 2022, EHRC carried out human rights monitoring work on care centres for older persons and in higher education institutions to assess inclusiveness of students with disabilities. Based on its findings it forwarded recommendations to address areas of concern. EHRC also investigated the situation of persons with disabilities (PWDs) and older persons in four internally displaced persons (IDPs) sites.

EHRC has carried out a series of advocacy and consultation activities on the measures that should be taken to respond to grave human rights violations committed against PWDs and older persons in the context of the conflict in Northern Ethiopia.

EHRC also published an explainer aimed at raising awareness on intellectual disability and human rights, as well as derogatory terms that must be avoided in public speeches and messages. The explainer on derogatory terms explained appropriate and inappropriate terms in line with regional and international standards.

## *Positive Developments*

Some positive developments to guarantee the rights of older persons and PWDs in the reporting period include:

- the submission of the draft Comprehensive Disability Law by the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs to stakeholders for comments;
- the issuance of Ethiopian Prosthetic and Orthotic Services regulation;
- the preparation of a manual on social rehabilitation service; and
- the development of a national database which helps to organize basic information on older persons and indicates their needs.

### *Concerning Developments*

Some concerning developments in the reporting period include:

- The resumption of the conflict in Northern Ethiopia which has aggravated the precarious situation of the most vulnerable including PWDs and older persons;
- As documented by EHRC, due to the conflict, inclusive education centers equipped with assistive devices for children with disabilities were destroyed, and the right to education was severely affected.
- The destruction of health centers and rehabilitation facilities as well as the disruption of other basic services severely affects PwDs and older persons.

### *Recommendations*

#### *To the State:*

- Ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa;
- Expedite the promulgation process of the Comprehensive Disability Law inclusively and transparently;
- Update the National Action Plan on Human Rights to specifically address the rights of older persons and PWDs.

#### *To the African Commission and the Working Group:*

- Encourage the Ethiopian Government to ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa;
- Urge the Ethiopian Government to expedite the promulgation process of the Comprehensive Disability Law inclusively and transparently;
- Support the work of national institutions which advocate and promote the rights of older persons and PWDs in Ethiopia; and
- Assist Ethiopia in efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Northern Ethiopia and support redress for older persons and PWDs.