



30th July 2021

**Joint Press Release by The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and Ageing with
A Smile Initiative (ASI)**

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

On 14 December 1990, the United Nations General Assembly designated October 1 as the International Day of Older Persons in order to raise awareness of the need to respond to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing and to promote the development of a society for all ages.

Today, three decades later this day has taken on even greater significance as an increasing number of countries are faced with the reality of population ageing. Having adopted the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States committed to achieving sustainable development for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. That landmark Agenda is based on the ideals of inclusiveness and shared prosperity and the pledge to leave no one behind.

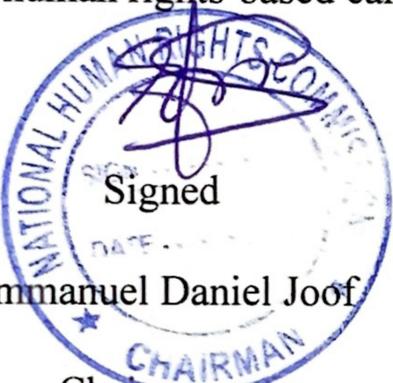
Today -- Friday October 1st, 2021 -- as the world commemorates the International Day of Older Persons, we celebrate the growing awareness of the diverse roles and contributions of older persons in Gambian society. Older Persons are an invaluable source of technical experience and expertise. In the rural areas, Older Persons continue to make important contributions to the socio-economic development of their communities. In addition, they often support the household and the community as caregivers for young children. Despite the enormous contributions of Older Persons to the development of their communities, we must recognize the fact that majority of them would require support and protection so that they are not left behind. We need nonetheless to ensure that the rights of All Older Persons are fully protected irrespective of their age or any infirmity.

We believe that every Older Person is a valued member of society who has the right to participate in their families, communities and society, based on what is important to them. The Gambia we want is a Gambia in which all Older Persons can lead dignified, healthy and secure lives as equal members of society. To achieve this, we will have to confront and fight age discrimination and ageism because experience shows that as Gambians grow older, they often face negative stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination because of their age.

On this International Day of Older Persons, we call on all people living in The Gambia, in particular political and community leaders, civil society and the Government, to commit to working together to tackle ageism and make The Gambia a society for all ages.

We further call on the Government:

1. To ratify and domesticate the Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa in The Gambia as required by all member states to be able to provide comprehensive protection and care for the country's aging population.
2. Provide a comprehensive health insurance coverage countrywide for older persons and ensure access especially for those living in the rural areas.
3. Partner with NGOs that are involved in advocating for the rights of older persons to harmonize efforts for effective human rights-based care and support.


Signed
Emmanuel Daniel Joof
Chairperson

NHRC