



The National Human Rights Commission, The Gambia

PRESS STATEMENT

9th April 2025

CONGRATULATING THE GOVERNMENT ON ITS ROLE IN THE OPEN-ENDED
INTERGOVERNMENTAL WORKING GROUP ON THE RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) welcomes and commends The Gambia's active participation in the recently concluded session of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group (OEIWG) on the rights of older persons, under the auspices of the United Nations, during the Fifty-Eight Session of the Human Rights Council held from 24th February to 4th April 2025.

The Gambia's engagement in this critical global process aimed at the elaboration of a legally binding instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons demonstrates its commendable commitment to the advancement of human rights jurisprudence, global solidarity, and inclusive development. It also underscores The Gambia's growing recognition of the vital role that older persons play in our families, communities, and national development.

Older persons remain among the most vulnerable segments of our society. They often face ageism, social exclusion, and limited access to social services such as healthcare, social security and transportation. In some instances, older women are particularly at risk of negative social norms and cultural beliefs such as accusations of witchcraft. These realities necessitate urgent and sustained attention both nationally and internationally.

The NHRC urges the Government of The Gambia to build on this momentum by:

- a. Domesticating the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa (African Union Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa) which it ratified in June 2024;
- b. Developing a National Policy on Older Persons;
- c. Ensuring social protection mechanisms including financial security and access to essential services for older persons, such as expanding pension and healthcare services; and
- d. Actively harnessing the contributions of older persons in all national development initiatives and discourses.

The NHRC remains committed to working collaboratively with the Government, civil society organizations, development partners, and older persons themselves to ensure that no one is left behind in the pursuit of justice, equality, and human rights.

Emmanuel Daniel Joof
CHAIRPERSON