

Inclusiveness of older persons in Georgia must be a priority - UN expert says

TBILISI (22 March 2018) – An independent expert appointed by the United Nations has called on the Government of Georgia to “make it a top priority to ensure inclusiveness and equality of older persons”.

Georgia is the most aged country in the Caucasus region, and according to the last census, every fifth person is aged 60 and over. By 2050, the percentage of people over 60 in Georgia will further rise to over 30 percent.

“Population decline paired with an ageing society has significant implications for the enjoyment of human rights by older persons,” Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, said at the end of her first official visit to the country.

“Older persons’ care in general remains an area that needs to be improved. There is no comprehensive strategy on long-term care and despite the introduction of the state-funded Universal Health Programme, older persons remain particularly vulnerable to significant out-of-pocket payments – especially for medication.”

Kornfeld-Matte said there were reports that various forms of violence against and abuse of older persons, including by family members, occurred frequently, and called on the Government to improve detection and prevention.

She said many older persons remained among the persistent poor. “I welcome the Government’s recognition that the current pension is insufficient, but I am concerned that the proposed pension reform misses key elements of solidarity and may not effectively address the risk of old-age poverty, particularly among women,” the expert said.

Kornfeld-Matte welcomed the recent adoption of the National Action Plan for the implementation of the State Policy Concept on Population Ageing in Georgia as a long awaited step towards transforming the main policy directions into concrete actions for older persons.

During her 10-day visit, the expert met with various Government authorities and civil society as well as others working on the rights of older persons and older persons themselves. A comprehensive report on her findings and recommendations will be presented to the UN Human Rights Council in September this year.

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