

Elders Have their Day under the Sun

The African Press Agency

The African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) opened Friday in Mauritius a two-day consultative meeting on the theme "The rights of older persons in Africa".

The meeting being held at La Plantation Hotel, in Balaclava, 15km from the capital Port Louis brings together experts from organisations that have intensive experience in the issue of the rights of older persons such as Help Age International and the African Rehabilitation Centre.

Discussions are being held on the means to improve the living and working conditions of older persons, on developing a coordinated approach, protecting the rights of older persons and seeking the collaboration of other stakeholders as well as ways to support the Focal Point (FP) which was established to promote and protect the rights of older people in Africa.

The FP was also mandated to draft a Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons.

Speaking at the opening, the Chairperson of the FP and one of the Commissioners of the ACHPR, Chief Justice of Mauritius Bernard Sik Huen, declared that to grow old is a privilege, as well as a public concern and not a social burden that needs curbing or a burden to society.

"Old persons represent a source to be valued, and in that regard, governments and the international community must provide support to and care for them," he added.

The Chief Justice enumerated the achievements of Mauritius in supporting the most vulnerable members of society through the positive vision embraced by successive governments.

He further declared that having an African Charter on the Rights of Older Persons will be a great step forward in ensuring that the rights of the elderly are recognised and respected.

Courtesy: <http://www.globalaging.org/elderrights/world/2008/africa.htm>