

ORAL STATEMENT TO THE 81st SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

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Chairperson, the poly crises of climate change, Covid 19 recovery, conflict and increased cost of living have shown the need for robust social protection systems. Yet across Africa, provision and financing for social protection remains inadequate. Our [research](#) has shown that only 1 in 5 Africans are covered by social protection.

1. Ratify the AU Protocol on Social Protection and Social Security

We commend the African Commission for the [Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Citizens to Social Protection and Social Security](#), which provides a comprehensive, lifecycle, and rights-based approach to social protection. We urge the government of Uganda and other states to immediately ratify this protocol.

2. Prioritise Social Protection for Older Persons

In Uganda, the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) Uganda's flagship social protection program for older persons introduced in 2013, only covers persons 80 years and above, excluding many older persons aged 60 and above especially those in the informal sector. Even those above 80 but who lack a national ID are excluded. As a result of this inadequate coverage, almost half of older persons in Uganda, [48% of older persons aged 65 years above](#), are living in multi-dimension poverty. In our current campaign, *A People's Pension*, we strive to ensure every older person aged 60 years and above can access universal pension and have developed a manifesto that calls on Uganda to ensure legal protection for social protection as a right for all, increase financing and improve access to social protection.

3. Increase Financing for Social Protection

Our [research](#) has found that Africa spends only 0.4% of its GDP on social protection, and Uganda's spending in particular, has not exceeded 1% of GDP over the years. The budget for SAGE, which is social protection for older persons, has [stagnated](#) the last three years at [121billion Uganda Shillings](#), and the 25,000ush provided per month to older persons has not changed in over a decade which is not enough to meet their basic needs. [ISER's research](#) has found that Uganda in 2021 lost about \$382.8 million which is 1.2% of its GDP (then) in tax exemptions. African states, particularly Uganda must immediately [curb illicit financial flows](#) and prioritize [progressive taxation](#) to raise financing for social protection for all older persons.

4. Implement General Comment No. 7

We commend the African Commission for passing [General Comment 7: State obligations under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in the Context of Private Provision of Social services](#). We call upon States particularly Uganda, to effectively implement [General Comment No. 7](#), which urges states to regulate private actors involved in social service delivery and to prioritize public financing for public services like social protection, health and education.