



A Joint Statement by the CSO Working Group on Social Protection Stewarded by the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER) on the Commemoration of the International day of Older Persons, 2025

Aging into Poverty: A Strengthened Social Protection System Remains a Lifeline for Older Persons in Uganda.

For Immediate Release

KAMPALA, 1st October 2025 – On the International Day of Older Persons, observed under the global theme “*Older Persons Driving Local and Global Action: Our Aspirations, Our Well-Being and Our Rights*,” the CSO Working Group on Social Protection calls for urgent action to strengthen Uganda’s social protection system. This year’s theme emphasizes that older persons are not passive beneficiaries but active contributors to social and economic development, and that social protection is the lifeline enabling them to age with dignity. The stark reality, however, is that many older Ugandans are rather aging into poverty.

Uganda is home to about [2.3 million people aged 60 and above](#), more than half of whom are women. Of this population, 13% stay alone, 15% of households in Uganda are headed by older persons. Almost two out of three older persons caring for young children. Nearly [45% of older persons in Uganda](#) live below the international extreme poverty line. Even then only [2.3% of older persons receive a pension](#).

The Senior Citizens Grant (SCG), under the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) program, currently supports only those aged 80 years and above—excluding more than 1 million Ugandans aged 60–79. Even for those eligible, the grant has remained stagnant at UGX 25,000 per month since 2013. Funding towards the SCG has remained stagnant at UGX 121 billion for now five years i.e. since FY 2021/22 and even registered a cut of UGX 20 billion last financial year despite the number of older persons growing.¹ [Research by ISER and the Research Action for Income Security](#) indicates that if the current benefit value of UGX 25,000 is maintained, at a total cost of about UGX 830 Billion would be needed to enable the SAGE program reach all older persons aged 60 and above which cost corresponds to about 1.1 percent of GDP, which is affordable. The research further recommends that, to ensure real impact, the benefit should be progressively increased to at least UGX 140,000 per month over the next 15 years.

“Older persons are disproportionately affected by weak social protection, resulting in rising poverty and neglect. It is urgent that Uganda adopts a law that among others establishes a rights-based framework for social protection and mandates sustainable funding,” said Angella Nabwowe Kasule, Executive Director of ISER.

“Older persons in Uganda require a comprehensive social protection system that guarantees old-age pensions as a right, ensuring that older persons can live with dignity and security,” – Rossette Ainepurani the Team Leader, Plan for Hope Initiative.

While we commend the government for developing the National Social Protection Strategy (2024–2029), which builds on the National Social Protection Policy (2015) to provide a concrete framework for addressing risk and vulnerability in Uganda. The strategy must therefore move beyond policy

¹ A People’s Pension: The Right to Social Security for Older Persons in Uganda. Lessons from Southern and Eastern Africa. Retrieved from: <https://shorturl.at/IO96V>. Page 22



intentions to guarantee enforceable rights, adequate financing, and universal coverage, especially for older persons and other vulnerable groups across the life cycle. We also commend the Government of Uganda for securing cabinet approval as a critical step towards taking steps toward ratifying the **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa on the Rights of Citizens to Social Protection and Social Security, 2022**. Ratification and domestication of this Protocol will anchor Uganda's commitments in binding law.

We call on the Government of Uganda to take further concrete national action to strengthen social protection for older persons. Specifically, the government of Uganda should:

1. Enact a comprehensive **Social Protection Act** that among others, legally guarantees old-age pensions as a right;
2. Take concrete steps to implement the National Social Protection Strategy, 2025
3. Lower the eligibility age for the SCG from 80 to at least 65 or 60 years;
4. Progressively raise the benefit amount under the grant to at least UGX 140,000 per month, over the next 15 years;
5. Ratify the **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Citizens to Social Protection and Social Security, 2022**.