



MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

STATE DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SENIOR CITIZEN AFFAIRS

SPEECH BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SENIOR CITIZEN AFFAIRS, JOSEPH M. MOTARI, CBS DURING THE 35TH UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS HELD ON 3RD OCTOBER, 2025 IN BUNGOMA CENTRAL, BUNGOMA COUNTY

- **H.E. Governor, Ken Lusaka, Bungoma County**
- **MP, Catherine Wambilianga, County Woman Representative, Bungoma County**
- **Representatives from Government Ministries, Departments & Agencies**
- **Ministry staff**
- **Representatives of the County Government, Bungoma County**
- **Representatives from Development Partners**
- **Representatives from the Private sector and business community**
- **Older Persons Organizations**
- **Our esteemed Older Parents**
- **Our esteemed Partners**
- **Distinguished Guests**

Ladies & Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to join you today as we mark the UN International Day of Older Persons (UNIDOP) here at Bungoma Central, Bungoma County.

The 2025 UNIDOP will serve as a platform for older persons to share aspirations, advocate for their well-being, and call for the full enjoyment of their human rights.

This year's theme "**Older Persons Driving Local and Global Action: Our Aspirations, Our Wellbeing, Our Rights**" is timely. It focuses on recognizing and supporting the transformative role that older persons play in driving action at both local and global levels, drawing on their expertise in health equity, financial wellbeing, community resilience, and human rights advocacy.

The Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002, remain the cornerstone of International efforts to promote the well-being and human rights of older persons. The Declaration articulates the global commitment to building a society of all ages, while MIPAA translates that vision into action through its three priority directions: older persons and development; advancing health and wellbeing into old age; and ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

This year's theme echoes these principles by highlighting the agency and contributions of older persons in building resilient and equitable societies.

This momentum is also reflected in recent international developments. In April 2025, eighty-one Member States in the Human Rights Council cosponsored the adoption, by consensus, of resolution 58/13, "Open-ended intergovernmental working group for the elaboration of a legally binding instrument on the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons. The working group will contribute significantly to the objective of promoting, protecting and ensuring the full enjoyment of the human rights by older persons.

Today, we are not only celebrating older persons, we are recognizing them as agents of change, custodians of heritage, and drivers of development. Their immense contributions of wisdom, resilience, and labor have built the Kenya we know today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world's population is not only growing older but doing so at an unprecedented pace and scale, and life expectancy has increased to 70 years or more. With increasing age and longevity, older persons especially those aged 70 years often require care and support services that are vital to maintaining their health, quality of life, and independence. In a world of accelerating change, it is increasingly urgent to ensure that older persons are not left behind, but are at the front in shaping policies and community life.

Kenya is experiencing similar trends whereby we are witnessing a declining dependency ratio in younger cohorts, improved life expectancy, better health coverage, and growing numbers of citizens entering older ages. With these gains come both opportunities and responsibilities. Older persons' aspirations to live in dignity, to be healthy, to be productive, cherished, and included, must inform our national plans and local actions. Older persons continue to make valuable contributions as they serve as community leaders, conflict mediators, guardians of indigenous knowledge, and mentors to the next generation.

This is why the State Department for Social Protection and Senior Citizen Affairs, in collaboration with our partners, is actively working to mainstream ageing in the national development agenda. We aim to ensure systems are in place where older persons are not passive recipients of aid, but active participants in decision-making and development processes.

As a State Department, our policies and programmatic interventions such as the Older Persons Cash Transfer Programme and the establishment of Kirinyaga Rescue Centre are designed to protect older persons. We must go further since aspirations must be matched with action, and action with accountability.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Older persons face unique health and social challenges. Non-communicable diseases, isolation, limited access to care, and vulnerability to abuse remain urgent concerns.

Kenya remains committed to upholding the rights of older persons as enshrined in Article 57 of the Constitution of Kenya, as well as the implementation of the Protocol of the African Charter on Human and People's rights on older persons.

Currently, in the FY 2025/2026 we are committed to finalize the Older Persons Bill 2025 which seeks to safeguard their rights comprehensively. Furthermore, the Government continues to provide social assistance to vulnerable groups. As at August, 2025 the Older Persons Cash Transfer Program (OPCT) has reached 1,148,390 beneficiaries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we reflect on today's theme, I call upon you:

To listen deeply to the voices of older persons: what they aspire to, what they need, what they dream of; To act with compassion, diligence, and justice to deliver policies not just in form but in function; To work collaboratively with the national and county governments, communities and partners; and to ensure that this theme is more than a slogan but translates into real change in the lives of older persons across Kenya.

Let us walk together to create a Kenya where ageing is celebrated, not feared; supported, not ignored; and protected, not marginalized.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I conclude,

Allow me to take this opportunity to acknowledge and recognize with appreciation the invaluable role played by the County Planning Committee, County Government of Bungoma, NGAAF, NG-CDF Kabuchai Constituency, Kenya Red Cross Society, Suqoon, National Bank of Kenya, Family Bank, Western Toast, Khetia's Supermarket, Organizations of Older Persons, Ministry Staff and all stakeholders for your tremendous contributions in making this national celebration a significant success.

I also wish to sincerely thank all the older persons present here today. You are vital to our present, and our future.

I wish to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to building an inclusive society that promotes and safeguards the rights of older persons, as enshrined in our Constitution.

As we move forward, let us be guided by the wisdom of our elders, who laid the foundations so that we may build even higher. Let us drive local actions, with global impact.

Happy International Day of Older Persons 2025.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.