Social protection for older persons in Lesotho at a glance

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There are **two major** social protection measures for older persons in Lesotho. These are namely **old age pension and public assistance** in cash and in kind. They are both **non-contributory** schemes.

There is need to **transform** existing social protection measures in Lesotho in order to avert the syndrome of poverty in old age. The need to promote economic growth & expansion of employment opportunities can also not be **overemphasized** in the quest for comprehensive social protection in Lesotho.

The public assistance scheme is designed for the **destitute** Basotho and is therefore not just for those aged between 60 to 69 years. However, though it plays an important role in alleviating poverty among older persons and their households it is also **exclusionary** as it is **means-tested**.

**In addition**, older persons also benefit from Lesotho’s free health policy at clinic level. Old age pension is a **universal** scheme catering for older persons from **70 years** upwards. **The pension is currently pegged at SAR 550.**

Not all applicants for assistance benefit from this programme. Furthermore the benefits are inadequate as the allowance is only **SAR250** monthly.

Though this scheme contributes significantly in meeting the needs of older persons and their households it **excludes** those who are aged between **60 and 69** years. According to the United Nations the onset of old age is **60 years**.

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