responsibility in enriching and ensuring the sustainability of a social protection system. It will have to confirm that the social protection and safety net systems cover an increasing proportion of the formal working population and to consider innovative and appropriate programmes for persons in the informal sectors.

- Older persons must be included as full participants in all national and local development activities and also share the benefits. Older Persons Associations (OPA) might be the important means of enabling participation through advocacy and promotion of intergenerational linkage and interactions.
- Initiatives should be undertaken to foster the development of local financial services, including microcredit schemes and microfinance institutions, in underserved rural areas and to encourage the establishment and revitalisation of small-scale enterprises by providing funding and technical support for income-generating projects and rural cooperatives. Widening economic diversification and opportunities would definitely encourage elderly and other migrants to stay at their rural origin.

  For upholding human rights and social justice principles, it is necessary to provide older persons with the same access and facilities to preventive and curative care and rehabilitation services in hospitals and health centres as other age groups, and promote affordable access to essential medication and other therapeutic measures by the older persons.
- It is important to include policy on ageing in the National Population and Health Policy. Moreover, an Institute of Geriatric Medicine needs to be established by the government to impart postgraduate teaching to doctors and nurses in this specialised field of medicine.
- All health and paraprofessionals, and other professionals and workers in social service sectors need to be trained up on basic issues of Geriatrics and Gerontology. Family and voluntary caregivers also need information, orientation and basic training on care and nursing of older people. Caregivers should be supported through financial, social, psychological and legislative mechanisms.
- Health education programmes have to be strengthened in the mass media, cultural activities and general education curricula. Young and middle age people need to be sensitised about maintaining sound health, the importance of a balanced diet, regular exercise and health check-up, and the consequences of smoking, chewing tobacco and drinking alcohol.
- Public and private companies should come forward to introduce and offer health insurance, old age insurance, etc. for the interest of the greater population of the country.
- Steps should be taken to introduce home care, day care, adoption/foster care and community-based care programmes covering all groups of older persons in the country.
- Support of mass media is indispensible as it is the harbinger of societal change and could be the guiding force in fostering the role of older persons in national development initia-

