



Panel Discussion on “Social Safety Nets for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities: Sharing Best Practices and Strengthening Social Security in OIC Member States”

SESRIC Side Event at COSP19

Date: 8 June 2026

11:30 – 12:45 (UTC-4)

CR-11, UN HQs-NY

Background and Rationale

Social safety nets are public programmes that protect individuals and households against chronic poverty, economic shocks, and social exclusion by providing targeted transfers, services, and institutional support. For older persons and persons with disabilities, these mechanisms are essential to ensuring a dignified standard of living, access to healthcare, and meaningful participation in society¹. However, at the global level, social protection remains far from universal as large proportions of older persons and persons with disabilities (PWD) still lack effective coverage, and where programmes exist, benefit levels often fall short of meeting basic needs or disability-related extra costs. International human rights instruments, particularly the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), recognise the right to social security and an adequate standard of living, emphasising that inclusive social safety nets are essential for realising these rights and for achieving the 2030 Agenda’s goals on poverty reduction, social protection, and reduced inequalities.

The member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) are home to a large and growing population of older persons and PWD. Since 2010, population ageing in OIC countries has accelerated, and by 2030, the share of the older population is estimated to reach 9.6% of the total population². According to projections, by 2050, in a significant number of OIC countries, the number of older persons will supersede that of young people. At the same time, PWD and special needs across OIC member countries continue to face persistent inequalities in social, economic, cultural, and political spheres, with inadequate social protection systems, lack of knowledge about disabilities, and stigmas being among the main reasons for their socio-economic exclusion³. While disability prevalence often increases with age, ageing and disability are not synonymous; accordingly, comprehensive social protection systems need to respond both to the income-security needs of older persons and to the disability-related barriers and additional costs faced by persons with disabilities.

Pension and social security programmes in many OIC countries remain neither adequate nor inclusive enough to meet the growing needs of these populations. Less than half of retired individuals in OIC countries receive an adequate old-age pension⁴, while private savings and intra-family support are increasingly insufficient for income security. Families continue to play an important role in care and support; however, demographic transitions, urbanisation, migration, and changing household structures may place greater strain on informal support arrangements, thereby increasing the importance of accessible, adequate, and sustainable formal social protection programmes and public

¹ [World Bank, What are social safety nets, what do they achieve, and where do they fit within competing demands on a government’s finances, 2017.](#)

² [OIC Strategy on the Elderly](#), adopted at the First Ministerial Conference on Social Development, Istanbul, 2019.

³ [SESRIC, People with Disabilities and Special Needs in OIC Member Countries, 2021.](#)

⁴ OIC Strategy on the Elderly, *ibid.*



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services⁵. The situation is further compounded for PWD and special needs, who face additional barriers including limited access to education, inaccessible employment environments, and inadequate coverage under existing social protection programmes⁶.

Recognising these challenges, the OIC has placed considerable emphasis on the welfare and social security of the elderly and persons with special needs. The OIC Charter⁷ calls for the promotion and protection of the rights of the elderly and people with special needs (Article I, Paragraph 14). The OIC-2025 Programme of Action⁸ identifies social security as a priority area of cooperation. The OIC Strategy on the Elderly⁹, adopted during the First Ministerial Conference on Social Development in Istanbul in 2019, sets out strategic goals across four cooperation areas: labour market and economic integration, health and well-being, enabling a supportive environment, and culture. Similarly, the OIC Plan of Action on People with Disabilities¹⁰, also presented at the First Ministerial Conference, aims to address socio-economic challenges and increase the participation of PWD in society. The Cairo Declaration¹¹, adopted at the Second Ministerial Conference on Social Development in June 2023, further reaffirmed the commitment of OIC member countries to preserve the welfare and social security of older persons and PWD, promote their participation, and ensure their social inclusion.

In response to these identified needs and in alignment with the high-level documents and strategies mentioned above, and acting on Resolution No. 4/51-C of the 51st Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, which invites the General Secretariat and relevant OIC institutions to study social safety net programmes in Member States and promote the sharing of best practices for the welfare of the older persons and PWD, SESRIC, in collaboration with the Permanent Observer Mission of the OIC to the United Nations, will organise a panel discussion on “Social Safety Nets for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities: Sharing Best Practices and Strengthening Social Security in OIC Member States” on the margins of the 19th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD (COSP19) on 9-11 June 2026 at the UN Headquarters, New York.

This high-level panel aims to shed light on pertinent initiatives developed by OIC countries and supportive policies suggested by relevant UN and international organisations with a view to promoting more comprehensive, adequate, and sustainable social protection systems for the older persons and persons with disabilities. It will also provide an opportunity to exchange perspectives on practical policy options and partnership models that can support implementation at the national, regional, and international level.

⁵ SESRIC, State of Elderly in OIC Member Countries, 2018.

⁶ SESRIC, People with Disabilities and Special Needs in OIC Member Countries, *ibid*.

⁷ [Charter of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation](#), Article I, Paragraph 14.

⁸ [OIC-2025: Programme of Action](#), adopted by the 13th Islamic Summit, Istanbul, 2016.

⁹ OIC Strategy on the Elderly, *ibid*.

¹⁰ [OIC Plan of Action on People with Disabilities](#), presented at the First Ministerial Conference on Social Development, Istanbul, 2019.

¹¹ [Cairo Declaration](#), adopted at the Second Ministerial Conference on Social Development, Cairo, June 2023.



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Key Themes to Be Covered

Against this backdrop, this high-level panel, organised as a side event to CRPD COSP19, will examine success stories and experiences from OIC member countries and how they are utilising social safety nets to strengthen the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities, while also addressing the social protection needs of older persons, covering:

- **Positioning social safety nets as a core pillar of comprehensive social policy in the OIC region:** How OIC member countries are using social protection to realise the right to an adequate standard of living and social protection for older persons and PWD, and to operationalise relevant international and national commitments in national policy and budgeting.
- **Political and fiscal choices to close coverage and adequacy gaps:** Perspectives on expanding coverage, including to informal workers and those outside contributory schemes, improving the adequacy of income support and services, and safeguarding fiscal space for disability- and age-responsive social protection despite competing priorities.
- **Reforming national legal and institutional frameworks for comprehensive social security:** High-level reforms to legislation, governance, and coordination that embed the rights and needs older persons and PWD in social security systems.
- **Harnessing Islamic social solidarity and innovative financing to complement comprehensive social protection systems:** Exploring how zakat, waqf and other Islamic social finance instruments, alongside tax- and contribution-based schemes, can help address financing and outreach gaps while reaffirming that such mechanisms should complement, and not rather replace, the public responsibility for ensuring adequate, accessible, and rights-based social protection.
- **Building OIC–UN partnerships and data systems to drive accountability and learning:** How OIC institutions and member countries can collaborate with UN entities and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs/DPOs) to enhance data on coverage and outcomes, share evidence of effective approaches, and ensure that commitments made at COSP result in measurable progress at the national level.

Expected Outcomes

- High-level messages on the role of comprehensive social protection in advancing the rights and well-being of older persons and PWD in OIC member countries.
- Identification of priority reform directions that may inform national agendas and future OIC processes, with respect to coverage, adequacy, accessibility, institutional coordination, and financing.
- A clearer understanding of how Islamic social solidarity instruments can be mobilised to support, but not substitute for, state efforts to ensure income security and access to services for older persons and PWD.



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- Enhanced collaboration among OIC institutions, UN entities, and relevant stakeholders, including OPDs/DPOs, on monitoring social protection coverage and adequacy, exchanging experiences, and pursuing follow-up in relevant OIC and UN fora.
- Increased awareness among COSP19 participants, including delegates from both OIC and non-OIC member countries, UN entities, and relevant ECOSOC accredited civil society, on the innovative social safety net models developed and their contribution to global discussions on disability-inclusive and age-responsive social protection.