



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

## UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

### Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Older Persons

#HRC60 • 17 September 2025



#### PRESENTATION OF THE THEMATIC REPORT

#### Ms, Claudia MAHLER, the Independent Expert (IE) on the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Older Persons

The SR introduces her thematic [report](#) which explores the [intersection of two fundamental and inseparable rights](#) - the right to social protection and the right to work for older persons. It points out the challenges faced by older persons when these rights are denied and evolutions societies that recognize ageing not as a burden, but as a natural and valuable part of life. The context for this report is urgent. People are living longer than ever before, which is a success, but it also requires adaptation of our social, political, and economic institutions. By 2050, the number of [persons aged sixty and over is expected to double](#). In some regions, older persons with all their different lived realities will make up more than a third of the total population. Yet all too often, ageing populations are spoken of only as a cost and burden, and it is not taken into account that inaction will lead to much higher costs for our societies.

The purpose of this report is to [challenge those assumptions](#) and place older persons where they belong - at the centre of a human rights-based approach to social protection and work. The



**obstacles older persons face** are not simply individual or circumstantial but are embedded in a broader system. They are rooted in **structural ageism**. This has an impact on institutions, laws, policies, and society as a whole. Older persons are often excluded from labour markets based on ageist stereotypes, in social protection schemes and their criteria, and in narratives that depict older persons as passive recipients of social allowances and care rather than holders of rights and active contributors to society.

**Structural ageism denies dignity and perpetuates invisibility.** The right to work and the right to social protection are interconnected and influence one another. The right to work is essential for participation, autonomy, and dignity. Work provides not only income but also meaning, a basis for social inclusion and a sense of belonging, including the notion of **usefulness**. Excluding people from work based on age denies them a core dimension of human life. However, the right to work cannot be fully realized without social protection. Without adequate pensions or health coverage, older persons are forced to work under conditions of precarity and exploitation. Access to work without social protection leaves people vulnerable to unexpected risks, such as illness or the general insecurities of older age.

Within the scope of her findings, the IE emphasizes that the **right to work does not expire at a certain age**. It is a lifelong right, and older persons must be free to choose if, how and under what conditions they participate in the labour market. Older persons already make up a growing proportion of the global workforce. Their skills, experience, and contributions are invaluable. Excluding them is **a waste of human potential**. Therefore, labour markets need to adapt to ensure their inclusion for as long as they want. This could involve offering flexible and decent work opportunities, investing in lifelong learning, recognizing both paid and unpaid contributions, and ensuring that older persons are not forced out of work due to prejudice.

Turning to the issue of **social protection**, the IE advocates for its universality and adequacy. Social protection systems must guarantee every older person a minimum standard of living with dignity. This means providing income security through pensions and other schemes, ensuring access to affordable healthcare, and protecting people against life's uncertainties. Social protection systems must be able to adapt to crises - as the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated - and be responsive to the needs of those in rural areas, those living in poverty and those facing multiple forms of discrimination. The IE illustrates her arguments with some very concrete examples.

- Old-age allowances are often insufficient to reduce poverty, for instance because the whole amount is used for medical expenses. In some cases, the allowance is just 10 per cent of the minimum monthly wage.
- Persons with lower incomes enjoy lower social protection through contributory systems, to be at a higher risk of living in poverty and to have to rely on non-contributory allowances. They must also work to achieve an income, which leads to exploitation in the informal sector.
- Particularly in the case of low-paid workers and those with interrupted careers, pension levels do not always meet the needs of older persons, for instance older women.



- Migrants, in particular undocumented migrants, might also lack access to the social security system of their destination country and therefore not be able to pay contributions or receive benefits.

Ms. Claudia MAHLER urges states to adopt a human rights-based approach in all areas of social protection and labour market policies and laws. This involves designing systems that uphold the principles of autonomy, dignity, non-discrimination, and participation. It means tackling ageist assumptions that promote exclusion. It also means ensuring that older persons themselves are actively involved in shaping the policies that affect them, rather than being treated as passive recipients.

Furthermore, the IE calls on governments to **strengthen social protection floors** to guarantee a minimum level of income security and access to essential services for all, regardless of age or previous employment history. She emphasizes the importance of inclusive and flexible labour markets that enable older persons to remain in or re-enter employment under conditions that respect their choices and capabilities. She further draws the Council's attention to another important issue - data. Without **disaggregated data** about the situation of older persons, policies will remain inadequate to their realities.

Urging states to act with a vision, the IE stresses that **the opportunities of longevity** can be harnessed to create more inclusive and sustainable conditions for everyone. Furthermore, the right to work and social protection are directly linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, SDG 1, Target 1.3, highlights the importance of social protection systems for all, including older persons. Guaranteeing **income security in older age** is essential for reducing poverty and upholding older persons' right to social protection. While many states are facing economic challenges and limited budgets, we cannot deny that choices must be made. However, there is a strong argument that investing in social protection and inclusive employment is never a lost investment, but rather a driver of stability. The **cost of inaction** is far higher.

Ms. Claudia MAHLER recalls that **ageism is not just abstract concepts** but lived realities for older persons. Their stories remind us of the human experiences behind the statistics. They tell us about the barriers they face when trying to access pensions, the discrimination they experience when looking for employment, the insecurities of informal work and the burden of waiting in long queues to receive social benefits. These testimonies are vital. They are lived experience and challenge us to act with urgency.

A society that respects the rights of older persons is a society that respects the rights of everyone. By guaranteeing social protection and decent work for older persons, we can **strengthen solidarity between generations**, reduce poverty, and affirm the dignity of every individual. We are also preparing for the future, as today's younger generations will be the older persons of tomorrow.

Despite the current turbulent times, the IE is convinced that, with political will, commitment and respect for human rights, we can build societies in which ageing is met with inclusion rather than exclusion, protection rather than neglect, and recognition rather than silence. To ensure the best protection, the IE encourages member states to support the development of a **legally binding instrument for the human rights of older persons**.



## US GOVERNMENT SANCTIONS

Ms. Claudia MAHLER draws the Council's attention to the current situation which impacts all Special Procedures mandate holders. She unconditionally denounces the US Government's sanctions against the Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Ms. Francesca ALBANESE. Expresses her full solidarity with her colleague, Ms. Claudia MAHLER stresses that sanctioning a Special Rapporteur appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council **violates international law** and is a **direct attack on the integrity of the UN human rights system**, including Special Procedures as a whole. The IE calls on all states to act decisively to denounce these sanctions and refuse to carry them out. She further calls upon the United States of America to immediately withdraw these illegal sanctions.

## PRESENTATION OF COUNTRY VISIT REPORTS

Ms. Claudia MAHLER shares some insights from two country visits she has undertaken since her last report to the UNHRC and expresses her deepest gratitude and sincere appreciation to the Governments of Malaysia and Saudi Arabia for their invitations.

In December 2024, the IE undertook a 12-day country visit to **Malaysia**. The Government's efforts to quickly adapt to the ongoing demographic shift that will make Malaysia an aged nation by 2030 are commendable. She was pleased to see positive initiatives such as **social allowances and free healthcare** contributing to the well-being of older persons. However, she was made aware of ongoing challenges throughout the country. For example, the system for non-contributory social protection allowances for older persons is complex and fragmented, making it difficult to navigate. Furthermore, the traditional system of families providing for older persons should not be used as a pretext to minimize the Government's responsibility in this regard. While commending the positive initiatives that facilitate older persons' access to employment, especially for vulnerable groups, there is a lack of a specific focus on **intersectional discrimination** affecting older women, older Indigenous persons, older migrants, older LGBTIQ+ persons or others. Having recognized ageing as a priority, the IE encourages Malaysia to turn this recognition into rights-based action with a meaningful budget.

In April 2025, upon invitation from the government of **Saudi Arabia**, the IE undertook a ten-day visit to the country. Throughout her country visit, the IE observed visible efforts to improve the situation of older persons. For instance, there were impressive leaps towards modernization, including a **myriad of services for older persons** that are difficult to find anywhere else. These include at-home and virtual healthcare and civil registry services, as well as advanced medical services in prison. However, a rights-based approach requires a focus on those who are in the most vulnerable situations. In the case of Saudi Arabia, non-residents seem to remain largely excluded from public policies for older persons, despite making up a large proportion of the older population. Most importantly, they are excluded from free healthcare and social security benefits. The IE encourages the Government to extend the protection to be available to all older persons in the country.

To conclude, Ms. Claudia MAHLER hopes that the further findings and recommendations in the two country reports will help both Governments build a better future for older persons. Standing ready for further dialogue and technical assistance, the IE invites all stakeholders not waste any



more time and to affirm together that *‘human rights do not diminish with age. They endure. They are lifelong. They belong to all of us.’* The IE hopes to continue engaging positively and constructively with States, building on the foundations that have already been established.

## REPLIES AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Starting from remarks on the two country visits, Ms. Claudia MAHLER thanks Saudi Arabia for its engagement and for looking forward to implement the IE’s recommendations, reaffirming her availability to provide support in the country’s endeavours. The IE also thanks Malaysia for their constructive dialogue, while once again stressing that the meaningful participation means that all the different stakeholders are engaged and that the draft bill is shared in advance. Without advance sharing, it is hard to get all the stakeholders in the loop.

Turning to question on **ageism in the labour market** and in social protection, the IE underlines the importance of shifting the perspective towards seeing older persons more as rights holders rather than recipients of benefits. On this, a swift change is needed. Making laws inclusive and getting rid of all the age and discrimination clauses is one of the first steps to be taken, as well as ensuring that all the contributions of older persons are valued in the same way as all the others.

**Technology** can play a positive role in giving older persons access to social security and the labour market, but this could be an obstacle and not a barrier. Therefore, the IE would urge all those who support the technological advancements to bring in focal points which support older persons in their endeavour to access these tools engaging in lifelong learning opportunities but also maybe to give them a stand by persons who support them as focal points on the national level.

Employers should also be encouraged to really create **age inclusive and age diverse workplaces**. Regrettably, this is often not embedded when it comes to hiring older persons. They do not have equal opportunities to get the job. They do not have the chance to participate in dialogues. At the same time, **anti-discrimination laws** must also be strengthened. The EU is very supportive of fighting age discrimination in the labour market, but one needs to see what is the outcome on the national level. The remedies must be strengthened.

All the negative assumptions have a negative impact on the inclusion of older persons and also on their contributions. Older persons very often face difficulties to get the information on the benefits and support. Many older persons are not able to get their allowances because they do not know how to act in certain circumstances, how to deal with the administration. If they are not given support, the **digitalization** might indeed lead to more barriers.

To guarantee **older persons’ right to work**, states must really combat ageism, challenge negative stereotypes about older workers and abolish mandatory retirement ages. Recruiting process including digital platforms must be inclusive and accessible with support for digital literacy and lifelong learning, otherwise older persons cannot engage. To ensure that older persons are part of the labour market, formal and informal work should be valued, leading to social benefits. The approach one-size-fits-all does not work. To **combat ageism**, the private sector must also be included and held accountable. Older persons are also needed in the labour market due to the





shortage of skilled workers. In this regard, the IE has examples to share with interested stakeholders.

Furthermore, she recommends **strengthening non-contributory pension schemes**, expanding coverage to those excluded from formal employment, and taking into account the specific risks of groups in vulnerable situations. Furthermore, the adoption of targeted measures to close the inequalities accumulate over the life course is needed. By ensuring a **universal minimum social protection** including non-contributory pensions, adjust social protection regularly to match cost of living and wage growth, preventing older persons from poverty.

**Flexible contribution schemes** may be crucial for self-employed and informal older workers. She recommends that states enhance social protection for older persons by ensuring adequacy, accessibility and broad coverage of benefits. Integrating contributory and non-contributory schemes and recognizing informal work and caregiving in pension calculation to prevent poverty in old age and taking into account gender lens.

The IE further calls for the removal of **discriminatory laws and ageist barriers**, the adoption of a gender positive and disability-inclusive policies to address intersecting inequalities and measures to close wage and pension gaps particularly for older women. The gender pay gap must be tackled. States should ensure that older persons belonging to **Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities** including Sinti and Roma have equal access to social protection by addressing the barriers that low employment rates and informal work creates for contributory pensions.

The IE further points out that she will present her report on **older persons in armed conflict** before the UN General Assembly in October 2025. Her report identifies the unique challenges faced by older persons in armed conflict during occupation, including barriers to access essential services, discrimination in the humanitarian response and systematic barriers to this protection. Her mandate drawing to a close, Ms. Claudia MAHLER extends its gratitude to all Council's stakeholders for the year-long engagement with her mandate. The IE is very grateful for all she could learn from all stakeholders and for their positive contributions.

#### **VIEWS EXPRESSED BY SAUDI ARABIA AND MALAYSIA AS CONCERNED COUNTRIES**

The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** expresses its expresses its gratitude and appreciation to Ms. Claudia MAHLER for her visit to the Kingdom from 20 to 30 April 2025, and for her report, which highlighted the positive aspects and pioneering and unprecedented practices offered by the Kingdom to this cherished group, as well as her constructive recommendations.

Based on the importance of effective cooperation between states and this mechanism in promoting and protecting human rights, Saudi Arabia affirms that it gives full consideration to all human rights standards in all its laws and procedures, including the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons, based on its culture and principles that require respect and appreciation for them. From this perspective, Saudi Arabia has been keen to support UNHRC resolution 58/13, which established an open-ended intergovernmental working group to develop a legally binding instrument on the human rights of older persons.

In this context, the Kingdom affirms that it views with great interest the substantive recommendations resulting from this report, and will take the necessary measures in accordance



with its national regulations and its obligations under the international instruments to which it is a party. Saudi Arabia wishes this thematic mandate and those responsible for it further progress and success in promoting and protecting the rights of older persons.

The Basic Law of Governance in Saudi Arabia guarantees a number of principles and provisions that promote the principle of equality and non-discrimination for all without exception. The Kingdom's labour law also emphasises that discrimination on the basis of gender, disability, age or any other form of discrimination in the workplace is not permitted. In line with the Kingdom's Vision 2030, which is centred on the human being in harmony with a human rights-based approach and the Declaration on the Right to Development, it affirms human rights principles in all its systems and procedures, either explicitly or implicitly, with a focus on protecting the rights of older persons in particular, as a group deserving of care, attention and concern.

In closing, Saudi Arabia reaffirms its unwavering commitment to protecting and promoting the rights of older persons and values the efforts of the Independent Expert Mechanism in highlighting the challenges and opportunities in this area. The Kingdom also affirms its support for constructive dialogue and multilateral cooperation in order to exchange experiences and best practices, thereby contributing to ensuring the dignity of older persons and protecting their rights.

The delegation of **Malaysia** thanks the IE for the country visit report and for highlighting the positive actions that have been taken by Malaysia. The country remains committed to safeguarding the well-being of older persons as stipulated in Article 8 of the federal Constitution which guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the law for all. Protecting the aging population remains a priority. Malaysia has implemented a range of progressive measures to support older persons including the expansion of social security, enhancement of health care accessibility, active engagement of older persons in policy making and adoption of inclusive age friendly infrastructure.

However, Malaysia recognizes that some challenges remain. The 13 Malaysia plan announced in August 2025 reaffirm Malaysia's commitment by featuring the development of the national blue print for aging 2025 to 2045, a structured plan to establish a long-term care ecosystem for older persons. The blueprint will be developed through a whole of society approach by engaging various stakeholders inclusively and transparently to strengthen coordination, enhance support and ensure a timely and targeted response to the needs of the aging population.

In this regard, the Malaysian delegation is disappointed that the report states that Malaysia did not engage in meaningful consultation with relevant stakeholders on the drafting of the Senior Citizens' Bill, because the consultation process is still at its initial stage as the draft bill is a work in progress. Malaysia remains committed to continuing regular engagement with stakeholders to ensure that the bill is inclusive, responsive and reflective of the needs of older persons. The delegation further regrets the references that do not accurately reflect Malaysia's position during the consultation sessions with the IE. In this regard Malaysia clarifies the following points.

First, any reference to proposed penalties concerning family member support for older persons in the senior citizens' bill is premature and risks prejudging the outcome given that the consultation process on the draft bill remains ongoing.



Second, while article 8 of Malaysia's federal Constitution does not explicitly refer to older persons, it guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the law for older persons. It also prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, descent, place of birth and gender which apply equally to older persons.

Third, Malaysia clarifies that community centres and social programmes are diverse, reflecting the country's multi-ethnic and multi-religious community. Older persons are free to choose activities in line with their cultural or religious background.

Fourth, Malaysia underlines that there is no discrimination in its national healthcare system, which is guided by the principles of fairness and equality with regular monitoring in place to ensure healthcare accessibility for all including older persons.

Malaysia reiterates that its policy on the rights of older persons is founded on inclusive and ongoing consultations with various stakeholders guided by its federal Constitution and national policies. Malaysia remains committed to continually improving the quality of life of older persons including through financial literacy and security, retirement planning and equitable access to social services. The country positively notes the IE's recommendations, particularly those relating to training, technical assistance and international cooperation,

Malaysia stresses its firm belief that greater collaboration in capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and exchange of best practices will assist all states - including Malaysia - in strengthening their frameworks for the protection and empowerment of older persons. In its collective endeavour to safeguard the dignity and well-being of older persons globally, Malaysia will continue to engage with all stakeholders and UN mechanisms in good faith and in a constructive manner. To conclude, Malaysia underscores the importance of a balanced and constructive reporting that recognizes both progress achieved and the challenges faced by member states in their national context.

## INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

### Regional and Cross-Regional Groups

**Algeria on behalf of the Arab Group** thanks the IE for her report and its constructive recommendations to strengthen comprehensive social protection systems. The Arab Group affirms that protecting the rights of older persons requires integrated policies, funded and sustainable social safety nets, and quality long-term care. The Arab Group works to ensure that age-sensitive data and age-disaggregated data are available. It further emphasizes the importance of considering the situation of older persons in crises, conflicts, and disasters, and ensuring their equitable access to economic, health, and social services without discrimination. In this context, the Arab Group expresses its deep concern about the grave violations against older persons in the occupied Palestinian territories, in particular the denial of healthcare, transportation, and essential services which undermines the Palestinian people's fundamental rights and human dignity. Finally, Arab Group affirms the cooperation of Arab states with the IE and OHCHR in all efforts to enhance the dignity and rights of older persons in the Arab region and worldwide.





**Argentina on behalf of the Core Group<sup>1</sup>** currently leading the negotiation of resolutions dedicated to the recognition of the human rights of older persons highlights the valuable work that Dr. Claudia Mahler as Independent Expert has carried out for almost six years at the head of this mandate. Her work has been instrumental in shifting perceptions, emphasizing that older persons are not merely beneficiaries of social services but are rights-holders entitled to dignity, equality, and participation in society. In this context, it is important to recall that recently, the Council took a decisive step toward a stronger commitment to the defence of the human rights of older persons. By consensus, with more than 80 cross-regional co-sponsors and under a strong applause, a resolution was adopted establishing an Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group, mandated to elaborate a legally binding instrument. Finally, the Core Group wishes the IE every success in her professional career, trusting that she will continue to contribute to the recognition and promotion of the human rights of older persons.

The **European Union** thanks the IE for her report which highlights severe disparities and inequalities in lived realities of older persons. It asserts that dignity, autonomy and equality for all in old age can be achieved only through a rights-based, intersectional and life-course approach to ageing. The EU and its member states are addressing the challenges of ageing societies by promoting lifelong learning and enhancing skills systems, encouraging longer and healthier working lives, and reforming social protection and pension systems. Under EU law, age-based discrimination in employment and occupation is expressly prohibited, safeguarding older persons from unequal treatment in recruitment, promotion, training, and workplace conditions. European citizens are entitled to social security benefits and services, including in old age, ensuring a life free from poverty or exclusion. The European Pillar of Social Rights reinforces this by guaranteeing adequate pensions and equal pension rights for all. In this regard, the EU will continue to engage with relevant UN bodies to enhance the protection and enjoyment of human rights of older persons. Lastly, the EU invites the IE to share examples of targeted strategies that governments could implement to ensure that every older person has access to social protection.

**Ghana on behalf of the African group** congratulates the IE on the quality of her report and the relevance of the topic addressed. The African group agrees with the IE that social protection and access to employment are human rights that must be guaranteed to older persons and that, far from being burdens, these persons are rights holders, contributors, and valuable members of society. To this end, article 18(4) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 27 June 1981 guarantees older persons the right to specific protection measures. To ensure the full enjoyment of this right, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons was adopted on January 31, 2016. This protocol, which entered into force on November 6, 2024, in articles 7 and 8, guarantees the right to social protection, including for persons who have not been able to contribute to social security schemes, and protection against discrimination in access to employment, respectively. Building on this codification experience, the African continent is willing to share it with the international community so that a binding instrument on the protection of the rights of older persons can be developed and adopted.

**Kuwait on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** states thank the IE for her important report, highlighting the intersection of older persons' rights to social protection and their right to

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<sup>1</sup> Argentina, Brazil, Slovenia, Philippines, Gambia.



work. The GCC states affirm their commitment to ensuring that older persons enjoy all their rights without discrimination, as they are an integral part of the Gulf family unit. They have already taken effective steps through legislation and regulations to protect the elderly and ensure their dignity, particularly financial, social, and moral support programmes, as well as awareness-raising and educational initiatives to promote a culture of respect for the rights of older persons. These measures reflect the prevailing values in the GCC states, which are based on respect for the elderly and an awareness of the importance of policies aimed at serving them in light of rapid demographic transformations. In this context, the GCC states emphasize the importance of addressing negative stereotypes and age-based discrimination in the labor market, as this is essential to enabling older persons to continue contributing their expertise and skills to society. Finally, the GCC states emphasize the importance of international cooperation, the exchange of expertise, and the adoption of practical measures to strengthen social protection systems and combat age-based discrimination.

### **State Delegations**

**Austria** promotes continuous professional development among employees, including older workers, ensuring their skills remain relevant in the evolving labour market. Digital platforms can also be a challenge for older persons looking for employment, so to improve their technological skills, Austria provides free information technology training. Finding a new job once someone reaches a certain age, can be a challenge, so the Employment Initiative 50+ facilitates the reintegration of unemployed persons aged 50 and above into the labour market. At the same time, a part-time retirement scheme allows older employees to reduce their working hours as they approach retirement, thereby easing the transition from full-time employment to retirement. With the statutory pension system in Austria, everyone who contributed throughout their work life, receives financial support following retirement. For those who do not qualify for sufficient pension benefits, there are social welfare support programmes in place.

**China** welcomes the report's focus on the intersection between the right to social protection and the right to work of older persons. Elderly persons are a precious national treasure. Respecting and honouring the elderly is a traditional virtue of the Chinese nation. Caring for and supporting the elderly is the shared responsibility of all society. To address population aging, China is implementing a national strategy for actively responding to population aging, focusing on developing the economy, improving the well-being of the elderly, and continuously enhancing social assistance and welfare. By the end of 2024, there will be 406,000 elderly care institutions and facilities of various types across China, with 49,494 million people receiving elderly subsidies nationwide. In April of this year, China's Ministry of Civil Affairs and other departments jointly issued guiding opinions on supporting the social participation of the elderly and promoting their meaningful contributions, providing them with high-quality and efficient career development services. Actively addressing population aging is a long-term strategic task for China. China is willing to work with all parties to promote the coordinated development of elderly care and the economy and society, continuously enhance the well-being of the elderly, deepen their value, improve their quality of life, and ensure that they have support, a secure place to rely on, a place to enjoy, and a place to rest.



**Cyprus** thanks the IE for her report. The right to social protection and the right to work are fundamental to ensuring the dignity, autonomy and wellbeing of older persons. Social protection mechanisms such as pensions, healthcare access and financial support play a crucial role in safeguarding an adequate standard of living. Unfortunately, significant gaps exist in legal and policy frameworks with many older persons facing poverty, discrimination, negative stereotyping and exclusion from the labour market as well as pension schemes. Discussions on existing legislative and operational gaps as well as possible solutions have been extensive. Cyprus believes that strengthening and implementing existing norms that recognize the specific challenges related to aging while at the same time removing ageist provisions in legislation will serve as a tool for their empowerment and protection. A legally binding instruments such as that included in UNHRC resolution 58/13 will be instrumental in this respect. Cyprus invites the IE to indicate additional measures to ensure that women especially from minority groups can retain a minimum level of social protection.

**Djibouti** welcomes the IE's report, which provides an overview of her activities and country visits, as well as a thematic analysis of the link between the right to work of older persons and their right to social protection. Djibouti shares the IE's view that access to work and social protection are closely linked, and that the lack of sufficient support and basic minimum social benefits contributes to the continued employment of many older persons, primarily in the informal sector. Furthermore, Djibouti recognizes that ageism and age discrimination can, in certain contexts, translate into discriminatory practices that are sometimes institutionalized in legal and policy frameworks based on deeply rooted stereotypes. The report shows that older women and people living in rural or marginalized areas are particularly exposed to poverty and exclusion. In this connection, Djibouti would appreciate the IE's guidance on specific measures to be put in place to ensure that social protection and the right to work truly take these inequalities into account.

The **Dominican Republic** reaffirms its commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of older persons. Stressing the country is facing an accelerated demographic transition, the delegation explains that today, 13% of the Dominican population is over 60 years old, and this figure is projected to reach 20% by 2050. Aware of this challenge, the Dominican Republic has strengthened the Dominican Social Security System, expanding coverage of solidarity pensions, creating databases to ensure that no older person is left out of programmes, and promoting preventive health policies and community spaces that foster active and inclusive aging. However, significant challenges remain. More than 50% of Dominican older persons worked in the informal sector, which limits their contributions and results in insufficient pensions. Particular attention deserves the situation of older women, who face double discrimination. During their working lives, they contributed fewer years due to caregiving responsibilities, and today they receive lower pensions, placing them at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion. The Dominican Republic reiterates that social protection is not a privilege, but a human right. In this regard, the Dominican Republic supports moving toward a legally binding international instrument on the human rights of older persons that recognizes the diversity of this group and guarantees equality, dignity, and security, particularly for older women.

**Ecuador** agrees on the need for a paradigm shift from narratives that frame older persons as a burden and instead recognize them as rights-holders and valuable contributors to society. Therefore, Ecuador has promoted initiatives that focus on the economic assistance, care, health,



and social integration of older persons, including through policies such as *‘My Best Years Pension’*, aimed at older persons living in poverty and vulnerability and *‘Pension for Older Adults’*, which benefits those without contributory social security coverage. Additionally, Ecuador has Residential Gerontology Centres for older persons who have been abandoned or have no family members, offering activities that prevent isolation and promote their physical and mental health. Unfortunately, despite the projected number of older adults by 2050, existing frameworks lack explicit protection against age discrimination. Therefore, Ecuador reiterates its strong support for the development of a binding instrument that includes the right to social protection for older persons and their inclusion in all their diversity.

**Gabon** congratulates the IE on the quality of her report and stresses that older people, particularly those from vulnerable groups, including women and people with disabilities, are often exposed to poverty. This situation results from the weakness or absence of social protection or retirement pension mechanisms due to various factors such as ageism, which restrict their access to the labour market or limit their opportunities to remain in it. To address this reality, which increases their vulnerability, the Gabonese government initiated a number of reforms in February 2024. These include raising the retirement age for civil servants from 60 to 62 as part of a new remuneration system, regularizing arrivals accumulated over several years, and increasing retirement pensions. However, despite these efforts, challenges persist, particularly due to the inadequacy of the relevant legal framework and the absence of specific programmes aimed at combating ageism and deconstructing the negative stereotypes that weigh on older people in the labour market. In this regard, Gabon would appreciate the support of the international community to assist in this process.

The **Gambia** thanks the IE for her insightful report and notes with concern the global challenge of ageism in the labour market, which limits older persons’ ability to remain active, secure livelihoods, and contribute their skills and experience. Such discrimination compounds existing inequalities and undermines the right of older persons to work in dignity. At the national level, the Gambia’s recent ratification of the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons demonstrates its commitment to protect their rights and welfare. The National Social Protection Policy 2015-2025 also prioritizes older persons, among other vulnerable groups. In addition, various pension schemes such as the Public Service Pension Scheme, the Federated Pension Scheme, and the National Provident Fund are all geared towards ensuring the dignity and welfare of older persons. The Gambia echoes the IE’s call to combat age discrimination, ensure adequate pensions, and strengthen protection frameworks. In this regard, the Gambia welcomes the recent UNHRC resolution 58/13, mandating the elaboration of a new international convention on the rights of older persons. The Gambia is proud to be part of the Core Group championing this process, and reaffirms its unwavering commitment to uphold the dignity, equality, and rights of older persons in all aspects of life.

**Ghana** thanks the IE for her report and shares the concern that ageism and inadequate social protection perpetuate poverty for older persons, especially workers in the informal sector. Ghana’s National Ageing Policy (2010) provides a framework in guiding and ensuring the well-being and rights of the older population. Ghana’s Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme offers direct cash transfers to indigent older persons, aligning with the ILO’s Social Protection Floors concept. Furthermore, the National Pensions Act establishes a multi-



tier system to improve income security. Ghana openly acknowledges the challenge, highlighted in the report, of extending pension coverage to its vast informal sector and is working on targeted strategies to include these workers. The report's call for a paradigm shift is welcomed. Ghana is committed to strengthening the implementation of its national policies, and ensuring that its social protection systems are adequate and accessible to older persons. Lastly, Ghana values international cooperation in this effort and remain dedicated to upholding the dignity and rights of older persons.

The **Holy See** takes note of the report on the intersection between older persons' right to social protection and the right to work. By 2030, one in six people worldwide will be age 60 or over accounting for 1.4 billion of the global population. This figure is expected to double by 2050. However, societies are not sufficiently prepared to address this demographic shift with proper respect and practical consideration for the fragility and dignity of older persons. This demographic shift is also a moral test of how societies value and care for their elders. When older persons is considered to be a social and economic burden, an increasing strain is placed on public services so that the needs of growing elderly populations can be met. In such context, there can even be a concerted push to legalize euthanasia and assisted suicide. These throwaway policies foster a culture of death rather than respect for the elderly. For social security systems to work, a strong bond between generations is essential. For this reason, the Holy See calls for greater investment for greater investing in social protection policies that support the family as the enduring foundation of the human society.

**Italy** reiterates its firm commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons. The IE's report rightly highlights the intersection between the right to social protection and the right to work, both essential to dignity, autonomy and inclusion. Strengthening comprehensive social security systems and ensuring equal access to labour markets are key to preventing poverty, discrimination and marginalization. Equally important is the promotion of age-inclusive policies that enable older persons to participate fully in society, according to their abilities and choices. Italy attaches great importance to non-discrimination, accessibility, meaningful participation and the full inclusion of older persons. Italy remains engaged in the Human Rights Council's work on this issue, as well as in advancing the 2030 Agenda, whose goals are crucial to the realization of the rights of older persons. Italy has reinforced its commitment through the 2022 Rome Ministerial Declaration, supporting the UNECE Regional Strategy of the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing. Since 2019, at a national level, Italy has also promoted active ageing policies through a participatory, multi-level coordination framework. In closing, Italy invites the IE to share some good practices of measures aimed at countering ageism and changing negative stereotypes about older persons in the labour market.

**Lebanon** is home to one of the youngest populations in the Middle East, and Lebanese youth have proven to be a powerful force for peace, reform and human rights. Despite facing immense challenges, economic crisis, unemployment, insecurity, regional tensions, Israeli military aggressions and internal displacement, Lebanese youth have mobilized tirelessly, leading grassroots initiatives and building bridges across communities. Many young Lebanese now face the difficult decision of whether to stay and rebuild their country or seek opportunities abroad. Those who stay continue to drive local change, while those who leave advocate globally. Both play essential roles in shaping Lebanon's future. To build on their efforts, we must increase





support for youth-led organizations, especially in conflict-affected areas. This includes providing sustained funding, building capacity and ensuring youth are included in decision-making processes. The international community must partner with youth, addressing their identified needs, empowering them and recognizing their leadership as a fundamental right and a cornerstone for lasting peace and human rights.

**Lesotho** welcomes the IE's report which attests to the fact that the intersection between older persons' right to social protection and their right to work centres on the need for adequate and inclusive policies that prevent and address stereotypes and age discrimination, allowing them to work if they choose to and receive sufficient support when they retire or cannot work. Lesotho noted that some of the challenges faced by older people include inadequate social protection, especially in least developed countries, as many of them lack sufficient pensions or social benefits to meet their basic needs. This predicament increase their risk of poverty and forcing them to seek work, often in informal sectors without benefits. Another challenge is that older people face exclusion and discrimination in the labour market which limits their opportunities for continued work and economic participation. Further, traditional views of older age as a period of economic inactivity can lead to policies that fail to support continued work or provide adequate social safety nets. Taking into account the overall challenges facing older persons, Lesotho asks how best could states meet their obligation to establish comprehensive social protection policies or laws, which address the interconnected needs of older persons, promoting their dignity and well-being as a way to guarantee continued economic participation.

**Mali** shares the IE's view that states should develop and implement laws, policies, and programmes that ensure that older persons benefit from social protection and equal access to the labour market, as well as the mobilization of funds for this purpose. It is in this spirit that the Government of Mali adopted the law of October 26, 2009, establishing a mandatory health insurance scheme (AMO), which covers, among other things, health costs, outpatient care, medications, and hospitalizations, and a medical assistance scheme (RAMED), which provides medical coverage for people without income, all of which benefit older persons. Although there is currently no scheme covering job loss in Mali, the Government created the National Employment Agency (ANPE) in 2001, whose missions benefit older people, namely the collection, centralization, analysis and dissemination of data relating to the job market and job offers, guidance for job seekers, promotion of self-employment, implementation of vocational training, retraining and integration activities.

**Malta** thanks the IE for her report and finds it regrettable that older persons worldwide continue to face serious challenges in the enjoyment of their rights to social protection and to work. Malta has been working towards combating this trend. Malta's National Active Ageing Strategy provides mechanisms that support lifelong financial planning and strengthens measures to ensure adequate pensions and access to social services. Nationally, a National Commission for Active Ageing was set up, which includes representatives from different Ministries and non-governmental organisations representing older persons. This National Commission is tasked with advising the government on how older persons can remain engaged in society, continue to work, live independently, and most importantly, mitigate challenges like ageism, elder abuse, and social exclusion. Lastly, Malta invites the IE to mention a few best practices in relation to ensuring that social protection policies safeguard adequate levels of social well-being for older persons.



**Mexico** thanks the IE for presenting her report and reaffirms its commitment to ‘leaving no one behind’, promoting universal and inclusive social protection systems that recognize the dignity and rights of older persons. Mexico has implemented a universal supplementary pension for people aged 65 and over, recognized as a constitutional right, which currently benefits more than 12 million people. Likewise, addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women, as well as the lack of employment opportunities, wage gaps, and unequal distribution of care and support tasks, the Women’s Welfare Pension was created for women aged 60 to 64, which seeks to strengthen women’s economic autonomy during this period. These programmes are implemented throughout Mexico, including in rural and Indigenous communities, without intermediaries, thus contributing to reducing poverty and inequalities in old age. Additionally, Mexico is developing a national care system, under a progressive and coordinated model that seeks to address the needs of diverse groups, including older adults. In closing, Mexico asks the IE to explain the responsibilities of the private sector to prevent and combat the inequalities and discrimination faced by older adults.

**Mongolia** aligns with the call for a rights-based, integrated approach that enables older persons to live in dignity, with both income security and meaningful opportunities for participation in work and society. In Mongolia, demographic shifts are underway. The older population - currently around 9% - is growing steadily. Many older persons continue to work, often out of necessity, particularly in the informal sector, herding communities, and rural areas. Mongolia particularly supports the IE’s recommendations to ensure universal and adequate pension coverage, especially for informal workers, women, and rural populations; promote flexible work arrangements and lifelong learning; and include older persons meaningfully in decision-making processes. With the adoption of the revised Law on Elderly People in June 2024, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025, Mongolia is actively pursuing pension reform, social welfare expansion, and improvement of rural service delivery, and remains committed to inclusive, non-discriminatory policies. Currently, the Government is developing the main directions of Mongolia’s development for 2026-2030, which is expected to provide for, inter alia, a comprehensive state policy on the elderly. Thanking the IE for her work, Mongolia reaffirms its support for the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons in all spheres of life.

**Montenegro** thanks the IE for her sober report, whose findings are a stark reminder that older persons continue to be denied their most basic rights - the right to social protection and the right to work - rights enshrined in international law, yet too often disregarded in practice. Older persons worldwide continue to face systemic inequalities and deepening disparities. Those subject to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, such as older women, persons with disabilities, migrants, Indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ persons, refugees, and internally displaced persons - are particularly at risk of exclusion and abuse. This injustice cannot be ignored. States must meet their human rights obligations by ensuring social protection systems that are available, adequate, and accessible, and by taking decisive measures to combat ageism in the labour market. Anything less constitutes a violation of human rights. A paradigm shift is also urgently needed. Older persons must no longer be perceived as a burden but recognized as rights-holders and contributors to society. Their diversity must be respected, and policies must move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach. A rights-based, intersectional, and life-course approach to ageing is the only path to ensuring dignity, equality, and autonomy in old age.



Now is the time to turn words into action. Montenegro reiterates its support for the development of a legally binding international instrument to safeguard the rights of older persons, including their rights to social protection and to work. Anything less would fall short of justice.

**Nepal** thanks the IE for her report and notes that the Constitution of Nepal guarantees senior citizens the right to special protection and social security. According to the 2021 census, 4% of the population of Nepal comprises of persons of age 70 and above, and over 90% of them benefit from the non-contributory social security measures. The courts provide free legal services to economically disadvantaged senior citizens. In public transport, seats are reserved for senior citizens, and fares are reduced by fifty percent. In addition, Senior Citizens Service Centres have been established at local levels with the view to promoting inter-generational transfer of knowledge, skills and experience. The availability, adequacy and accessibility of social protection measures, and obtain or retain employment for senior citizens, remain key challenges. In this context, Nepal would appreciate the IE's views on ways to further enhance senior citizens' access to social protection and employment.

**Nigeria** thanks the IE for her report and takes note of the recommendations therein. The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound effects globally, impacting people in every region, and older persons were among the most vulnerable. Nigeria shares the concern highlighted in the report regarding the heightened vulnerabilities of older persons, particularly those living in rural and remote areas. To address these challenges, Nigeria has taken concrete steps to protect and promote the rights of older persons. The National Senior Citizens Centre was established to coordinate and implement policies and programmes aimed at improving the quality of life for older persons. The 2023 National Policy on Ageing addresses the multidimensional challenges faced by older persons, including social, health, economic, and financial constraints. Furthermore, Nigeria ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in 2023, reinforcing the country's commitment to preventing discrimination, ensuring access to healthcare and social protection, and prioritizing older persons in humanitarian emergencies. Pension reforms have also been implemented, including the recent approval of increased pension payments in August 2025. Finally, Nigeria remains committed to ensuring older persons live with dignity and security and inclusion through sustained collaborative efforts.

**North Macedonia** thanks the IE for her valuable report, whose analysis highlights critical issues often overlooked, such as structural inequalities, persistent ageism, and inadequate policies that undermine the dignity and rights of older persons. North Macedonia is particularly concerned about the gender pension gap, disproportionately affecting older women, as well as the compounded challenges faced by older persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups. In this regard, North Macedonia echoes the Expert's call for universal and adequate pension systems and age-inclusive labour policies. Noting that societies are ageing rapidly, with over two billion people projected to be over 60 by 2050, the world's response to this demographic shift must reflect the commitment to equality and human rights. Investing in inclusive labour markets is both a legal and moral imperative to ensure that no one is left behind. In the case of North Macedonia, recent amendments to the Law on Employment for the first time allow pensioners to work without losing their pension benefits, offering greater choice and inclusion. Lastly, North

Macedonia asks the IE which other immediate steps could states undertake to effectively counter ageism in the labour market.

**Oman** affirms its unwavering commitment to caring for the elderly and enhancing their quality of life, stemming from its keenness to empower this group to participate effectively in society, based on the national values inherent in Omani society, and in line with Oman Vision 2040 and with relevant regional and international directives. In this context, Oman has made a number of advancements in the social protection system, including the allocation of monthly financial aid within the Elderly Benefit Program to ensure a minimum level of social protection and the provision of supportive devices and equipment to enhance the independence of the elderly and facilitate their ability to perform daily activities safely and with dignity, in addition to the establishment of care centres that take into account the psychological and social dimensions of this group. In conclusion, Oman renews its commitment to continuing to develop the social protection system with the aim of achieving decent living conditions for the elderly within the framework of an approach based on rights and social justice.

The **Philippines** thanks the IE for her report. A significant and often overlooked challenge for a growing segment of the world's population - older persons - is the dual predicament of inadequate social protection and substantial barriers to meaningful labour force participation. Age-based discrimination in the labour market and insufficient pension coverage often lead to poverty among older persons, especially those with intersecting vulnerabilities. A rights-based approach to addressing this pervasive problem shows that the right to work and the right to social protection are mutually reinforcing. Everyone should be able to live in dignity, equality, and autonomy in old age. This means ending ageism and ensuring older persons' equal access to decent jobs and social protection. While important progress has been made, substantial normative and implementation gaps remain, the Philippines urges states to actively and constructively participate in the elaboration of a legally binding instrument on the rights of older persons, pursuant to HRC resolution 58/13 which the Philippines is proud to have shepherded last year.

**Poland** fully supports the IE's mandate and thanks for the presentation of the report. Empowering older people and strengthening their role in society remains a priority of Poland's social policy. Poland recognizes that extending older persons' professional activity contributes to their individual well-being and addresses some demographic challenges. Thanks to introducing various incentives for employers, Poland managed to achieve an impressive 51.7% increase in the number of working pensioners over the past nine years. However, extended professional activity must respect the rights of older persons to autonomy, dignity, and self-determination. This requires a comprehensive approach that Poland is committed to ensuring safe working conditions, providing access to quality and affordable services, and opportunities to fully participate in social life. The report concludes that the lower retirement age for women constitutes discrimination based on both age and gender, and that early retirement leads to reduced pension benefits for women. At the same time, raising the retirement age faces significant social resistance in Poland. It is essential to promote voluntary professional activity for as long as possible. Poland asks the IE to propose solutions to reconcile these two positions.



**Qatar** emphasizes the great importance it attaches to the elderly, as they are an integral part of the Qatari family and society. It views the promotion and protection of their rights as a priority in national efforts to promote and protect human rights. In this regard, the State of Qatar has directed all its ministries and institutions to use the term ‘Senior Citizens’ instead of ‘Older Persons’ in recognition of their role and efforts that have contributed to the country’s comprehensive development. Qatar has taken numerous measures at the legislative and executive levels to enforce their rights within the framework of social development policies, which are based on principles, foremost among which are the Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar and Qatar National Vision 2030. Qatar’s concern for the elderly is also based on fundamental pillars, most notably religious duty and cultural values that require respect and protection. The country’s elderly enjoy the freedom to determine their living conditions that suit their needs and access all services, most importantly healthcare, psychological care, legal protection, social security, and housing. They are empowered to participate effectively in public life and utilize their expertise in various fields, ensuring a dignified life for them in their community. The Qatari government sponsors the Centre for Empowerment and Elderly Care (*Ehsan*), an institution that provides healthcare and social services to the elderly and contributes to implementing the objectives of relevant regional and international conventions.

**Serbia** aligns itself with efforts to advance the protection and promotion of the human rights of older persons. Serbia is actively working to implement international standards and strongly support the initiative to adopt a dedicated UN convention on the rights of older persons, to ensure that older persons live with dignity, respect, and equal opportunity. Welcoming the IE’s report and recommendations, Serbia highlights the importance of fostering inter-generational solidarity. Older persons should not be seen only as a vulnerable social group, but also as a valuable resource — their knowledge, experience, and contributions continue to strengthen our societies. Serbia remains concerned by persistent age discrimination in both policy and practice. Serbia has taken steps to address the issue, through legal framework that includes mechanisms for redress, such as the Commissioner for Equality and the Ombudsman. Aligned with the UN 2030 Agenda, Serbia was among the first countries to incorporate the “Leave No One Behind” principle into its legal framework, focusing on participation, accountability, non-discrimination and empowerment. However, challenges remain. Rapid digitalization presents a barrier to inclusion, and Serbia is promoting lifelong learning to empower older persons with new skills, enabling them to remain active in society.

**Slovenia** thanks the IE for the report and commends her for tireless work advocating for human rights of older persons in the UN framework and beyond. Despite being a heterogeneous group, older persons face several common challenges worldwide, such as invisibility, intersecting forms of discrimination and are at higher risk to poverty, especially those in vulnerable situations. Social protection and the right to work are human rights, yet access to social protection is not equally accessible and older persons often face ageism and stereotypes in the labour market. To address these gaps, a meaningful participation of older persons when designing laws and policies, is of particular relevance. As mentioned in the IE’s report, women face discrimination throughout their lives. It affects their enjoyment of the right to social protection in older age and their employment history is more likely interrupted than men’s. Slovenia invites the IE to elaborate how to better prevent these practices and ensure that women enjoy equal access to social





protection as well as to reduce gender gaps in employment, wages and pensions. Slovenia looks forward to the IE's continued guidance on how states can effectively combat ageism and ensure inclusive, rights-based policies for older persons.

**Thailand** thanks the IE for her report, which rightly underscores the importance of addressing ageism, ensuring access to decent work, and strengthening social protection systems. In Thailand, the Department of Older Persons has identified 'employment of older persons' as a core strategy for ageing society preparedness. Recognizing that older persons increasingly wish to remain active in society, Thailand has extended protections under labour law to ensure their right to work, free from discrimination. The Government also offers tax deductions to employers who hire persons aged 60 or older to incentivize hiring. These efforts are reinforced by policies that connect employment with social protection, enabling older persons to continue contributing their skills while being safeguarded in their well-being. Moving towards becoming an ageing society, Thailand remains committed to advancing a holistic approach that upholds the human rights of older persons in line with international standards.

**Ukraine** thanks the IE for her tireless work in advancing the protection of the human rights of older persons. Ukraine continues to face the devastating consequences of Russia's unprovoked war of aggression. Older persons who deserve to live with dignity and in peace are instead subjected to unimaginable suffering. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, nearly one-third of all civilian deaths in Ukraine have been elderly. Many are unable to escape Russian attacks due to limited mobility, disabilities or chronic illnesses. Russia's systematic assaults on civilian infrastructure have deprived them of food, water, medicine and shelter. Hospitals and care facilities have been deliberately struck leaving the most vulnerable without life-saving treatment. The cruelty of this aggression was again revealed on 9th September, 2025, when Russia struck the village of Yarova in Donetsk region at the very moment when pensioners had gathered to receive their pension payments. The strike killed 24 civilians and wounded 18 others. Most were elderly. Ukraine urges the UNHRC and the IE to pay particular attention to these grave violations to ensure accountability and to uphold justice for the innocent victims.

The **United Arab Emirates** is committed to protecting the rights of older persons and ensuring their well-being through a number of initiatives aimed at supporting them, in line with the goals set by the UAE Centennial 2071 Plan. The UAE adopted Federal Law No. 9 of 2019 on the Rights of Senior Citizens, which guarantees their right to a suitable environment, housing, work, and social and healthcare care, including medical insurance, home nursing, and mobile services, and gives them priority in government services. Based on this comprehensive legislative framework, the UAE has developed a comprehensive national policy for senior citizens to ensure the sustainability of support for them and to activate their role in society. The national policy for senior citizens is based on seven main pillars, most notably healthcare and financial stability. The financial stability pillar includes initiatives to encourage the efforts of senior citizens and support their entrepreneurial projects. In this context, the UAE has launched practical initiatives such as the Masarra Card, which provides special privileges and services to senior citizens, and the Retirement Project Support Program, which grants privileges and exemptions to business owners. Finally, the UAE affirms its commitment to pursue its work with the international community to promote the rights of older persons, contributing to building a cohesive society that guarantees dignity and well-being for all its members.



**Vanuatu** welcomes the IE's report and stresses that in the Pacific context, older persons are more than beneficiaries of services. They are pillars of families and communities, preserving knowledge, culture, and social cohesion. It is therefore essential that social protection systems not only provide income security but also empower families and communities to support older persons in ways that are culturally rooted and sustainable. Vanuatu also stresses the right of older persons to continue working if they wish, free from age discrimination and in conditions of dignity. In Vanuatu, many elders remain active in farming, crafts, and community leadership. Policies must therefore value their contributions and provide flexible work opportunities. Climate change and economic shocks pose particular risks for older persons in island nations. For this reason, social protection must be resilient and community-based, ensuring that no elder is left behind during crises. Finally, Vanuatu calls for stronger international cooperation, including progress toward a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons, so that families, communities, and governments alike can better uphold these rights.

**Viet Nam** currently has 16 million older persons accounting for 60% of its population. The rights of older persons are enshrined in the Vietnamese Constitution and detailed in its law on the elderly, underscoring the traditional value of respecting and caring for older persons. Viet Nam also strengthens its international commitment in this regard and has co-sponsored UNHRC resolution 58/13 that initiated the drafting process of the legally binding instrument on the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons. Taking note of the IE's report, Viet Nam invites the IE to further elaborate on how to ensure sufficient job opportunities and anti-discrimination measures for older persons, especially in developing countries, and the best way of strengthening social protection system to ensure access to reliable and adequate income for older persons. Viet Nam also asks the IE which specific policies and incentives could be implemented to expand social protection coverage for older persons who worked in the informal economy.

### UN Entities

**FAO** states that In 2020, nearly 300 million people aged 65 and over lived in rural areas, where hunger is more prevalent and over 75 percent of the world's extreme poor live. Many older persons employed in agriculture, particularly women, lack access to adequate social protection, pensions or other forms of support, worsening their livelihoods, food security and nutrition and forcing them to work under precarious conditions. As youth migrate, elders are left with limited support networks and rely heavily on land as a safety net. This delays intergenerational land transfer and contributes to the ageing of farming communities. With low participation in pensions systems in agriculture, old-age poverty remains a significant risk threatening the sustainability of national protection systems. In response, FAO supports the G20 Call to Action on Universal Social Protection to protect vulnerable rural populations. FAO assists countries to uphold the right to adequate food and social security, including in expanding rural pension schemes and food assistance initiatives, while promoting the recognition of older farmers' knowledge and contributions, particularly in safeguarding biodiversity.

**UNFPA** welcomes the IE's report and shares the report's concern that, despite robust international and regional frameworks, older persons continue to experience disparities and inequalities in their rights, especially those facing multiple and intersecting forms of



discrimination. Older women, persons with disabilities, migrants, Indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ persons, refugees, and internally displaced persons are often most at risk of exclusion. For women in particular, the cumulative impacts of the gender pay gap, unequal caregiving responsibilities, and interrupted work histories lead to lower or non-existent pensions, deepening poverty and dependence in old age. The world is aging rapidly. While developed countries currently have the largest shares of older persons, many developing countries are experiencing the most rapid demographic shifts, often without the necessary systems and resources to fully respond. To assist countries concerned with population aging, UNFPA's Programme on Demographic Resilience supports the collection of population data, as well as the analysis of population-development linkages and policy dialogues on population dynamics. Additionally, UNFPA offers technical support in the formulation of strategies, policies and programmes to promote healthy and active aging, such as healthy aging centres throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia. UNFPA stands ready to support member states in implementing gender- and age-responsive, disability-inclusive social protection systems. UNFPA advocates for a rights-based, intersectional, and life-course approach to population aging, one that promotes dignity, autonomy, and equality for all.

### **National Human Rights Institutions**

The **Ethiopian Human Rights Commission** states that Ethiopia has prepared a draft law on Older Persons and ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa. Despite the legislative measures, economic challenges, such as high inflation, a weak social protection, have disproportionately affected older persons, many of whom are not engaged in income-generating activities. Conflicts, insecurity and natural disasters have exacerbated the vulnerability of older persons in affected regions. Displaced older persons living in camps are exposed to direct attacks, which threaten their safety and well-being. Poor documentation of older persons' needs contributes to their exclusion from enjoyment of their rights. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission urges the government and partners to strengthen targeted interventions that address the specific vulnerabilities of older persons, including enhancing social protection mechanisms, guaranteeing the safety and dignity of older persons in displacement and conflict settings, and fully integrating their needs into development planning.

The **Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)** welcomes the report of the Independent Expert on the human rights of older persons, following her visit to Malaysia in December 2024. Malaysia is experiencing rapid population ageing, with older persons projected to comprise 15% of the population by 2030. This demographic shift presents urgent human rights challenges that demand stronger legal safeguards and inclusive policies. The Commission takes note of the IE's findings that echoes SUHAKAM's work, including persistent ageism and the absence of legal protection against age-based discrimination. Despite Malaysia's National Policy for Older Persons, significant gaps remain in healthcare access, social protection, and long-term care. The Commission calls for a domestic legislation and constitutional reform to prohibit age-based discrimination. Equally important is the establishment of a rights-based social protection framework to ensure dignity and security for older persons. Expressing its support for the development of an international convention on the rights of older persons to provide global protection, the Commission stands ready to work with governments, the United Nations, and all stakeholders to advance the dignity and rights of older persons in Malaysia.



The **Human Rights Commission of Nigeria** thanks the IE for her comprehensive report and for spotlighting the persistent challenges faced by older persons globally. In Nigeria, while significant progress has been made, notably with the approval of the National Policy on Ageing in 2021 and the establishment of the National Senior Citizens Centre (NSCC), older persons still face socio-economic exclusion, age-based discrimination, and limited access to essential services, particularly in rural and underserved communities. The Commission is mandated to promote the rights and dignity of older persons through policies on income security, health care, social inclusion, and training opportunities. However, implementation remains uneven due to limited funding, awareness gaps, and infrastructural deficits at state and local levels. The Commission continues to monitor and support efforts toward integrating the rights of older persons into national and subnational development plans. Urging increased inter-agency coordination and accelerated domestication of the AU Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons, the Commission further calls on international partners to support technical assistance, community-based care models, and anti-discrimination campaigns to reinforce the social protection architecture for the elderly.

The **Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines** commends the IE's report, which particularly resonates with the human rights situation of older persons in the Philippines and abroad. The Philippine Commission's research revealed that 63% of senior citizens in the Philippines receive monthly pension, yet 74% of them find it insufficient to meet basic needs. They must continue working long past retirement age, yet they often face low wages, precarious employment, limited training opportunities and age-based discrimination. Social protection floors must guarantee a livable pension, but they must also reinforce older workers' access to age-inclusive jobs. Without both, older persons are trapped in a cycle of poverty and exclusion. The Commission calls on all member states to combat workplace ageism and age discrimination through awareness campaigns and legal remedies; index pensions to inflation and expand non-contributory social pensions to reach every vulnerable older person; and invest in retraining and flexible work schemes that value the skills and experience of older persons. Finally, the Commission encourages member states to continue supporting UNHRC resolution 58/13 that established an open-ended intergovernmental working group tasked with the elaboration of a legally binding international instrument on the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons for they are rights holders entitled to full enjoyment of their human rights.

### **Non-Governmental Organizations**

**AKAHATÁ** on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative (SRI) appreciates the report's emphasis on social protection as a human right and its gender perspective, which shows the impact on pensions of the gender pay gap, the interruption of careers due to childbirth, and the unequal distribution of caregiving tasks. Pensions must be sufficient to guarantee an adequate standard of living. However, many countries are experiencing setbacks due to adjustment policies, debt repayment, and neoliberal policies. This is the case in Argentina, where pensions are too low and a moratorium that benefited people without sufficient contributions, especially women, was repealed. Furthermore, the right of older people to protest is violated, as they are systematically repressed with tear gas, batons, and rubber bullets, in a serious anti-democratic shift. Although the report addresses intersectionality, SRI regrets that it fails to mention sex workers, who are systematically excluded from the social protection system due to criminalization, stigma, and the



lack of legal recognition of their work. This exclusion results in a total lack of access to pensions, health insurance, or financial support, a situation that is more acutely felt in older age. SRI urges states to guarantee decent universal pensions, without discrimination of any kind.

The **German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations** (*Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Seniorenorganisationen, BAGSO*) expresses its great appreciation to the IE, acknowledging that during her mandate, Ms. Claudia MAHLER has worked tirelessly to promote the rights of older people worldwide. Like you, the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations, member of GAROP, calls for a secure material basis to enable all older persons to live in dignity. Beyond these material basics, conditions conducive to social and political participation appropriate for older people are also needed. As older people, the Association wants equal opportunities without ageism and without discrimination in terms of work and leisure, in our private lives and in society and politics, digital and analogue, in the villages and communities where we live, and at regional, national and international level. Therefore, the Association urges to be included as equal partners in the Intergovernmental Working Group tasked with elaborating a legally binding instrument for the rights of older persons.

**China Great Wall Society** supports the IE's report on the intersection of social protection rights and the right to work for older persons. The International Patriotic Pact Organization advocates for a just and peaceful international order and pays close attention to the protection of the rights and interests of older persons globally. The Organization has found that the United States has deficiencies in protecting the rights and interests of older persons, with serious issues such as unequal medical coverage, inadequate pensions, and social isolation. Some policies even indirectly infringe upon the rights of older persons, such as cutting social security expenditures and restricting Medicaid programmes. The organization calls on the US Government to face up to these issues and take effective measures to improve the social protection and working conditions of older persons. It hopes that the United States, as an important member of the international community, will actively fulfill its international responsibilities, respect and protect the rights of older persons, and set an example for global protection of the rights and interests of older persons. The International Patriotic Pact Organization will continue to uphold the principles of justice and peace and promote cooperation and exchanges among countries worldwide in protecting the rights and interests of older persons. The Organization firmly believes that only through the joint efforts of the international community can we create a more just and inclusive living environment for older persons. Lastly, it hopes that everyone will pay attention to the International Patriotic Pact, providing a harmonious environment for promoting the protection of the rights and interests of older persons globally.

The **Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)** and ALQST for Human Rights welcome the IE's visit to Saudi Arabia in April. Such visits are essential, particularly given their rarity due to the Saudi authorities' routine denial of access to independent observers. As the IE, the GCHR and ALQST strongly deplore the Saudi authorities' refusal to grant her access to several older persons arbitrarily detained in *Al-Ha'ir* prison. This constitutes a serious breach of the visit's terms of reference. As a result, the visit to *Al-Ha'ir* prison offered only a carefully managed and partial view. While the report highlights the quality of some facilities, it fails to reflect the reality experienced by arbitrarily detained individuals such as prominent preacher Salman al-Odah, 68 years old, who have endured severe mistreatment, including medical neglect. Tragically, prominent human





rights defender Dr. Abdullah al-Hamid died in custody at the age of 69, following repeated denials of necessary medical care. GCHR and ALQST echo the IE's concern over the lack of transparency surrounding the number, health status, and legal grounds for the detention of older persons. As the IE rightly states, this opacity severely undermines accountability and independent monitoring efforts. The IE further noted that most domestic care workers are bound by the Kefala system of sponsorship to their employer, which exposes them to a high risk of economic and physical abuse, trafficking and exploitation. GCHR and ALQST urge the Saudi authorities to implement the IE's recommendations in full, including reviewing the legality of all detentions involving older persons and immediately releasing those whose detention has been deemed arbitrary by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and to provide labour rights for all migrant workers.

**HelpAge USA** welcomes the IE's report, calls on the UNHRC to renew the Expert's mandate, and fully supports the recommendation urging states to advance the development of the international legally binding instrument on the rights of older persons, ensuring that it guarantees the right to social protection for older persons in all their diversity and explicitly bans age-based discrimination. The UNHRC took a historic step by establishing the Intergovernmental Working Group to draft a new convention on the rights of older persons. To be credible, the drafting process must be participatory, transparent, and grounded in the lived experiences of older persons everywhere. HelpAge USA calls on member states to guarantee the full and meaningful participation of older persons and their representative organisations, including non-ECOSOC accredited, whose voices must be heard from the outset; and enable remote and hybrid participation, ensuring transparency and global inclusiveness. The United Nations should also make adequate and timely resources available to ensure a fully inclusive process. This Convention is urgently needed. Its foundations will only be strong if older people themselves are at the heart of the process from the very beginning.

The **International Federation on Ageing** warmly welcomes the timely and powerful report of the IE and fully supports the report's call to uphold the economic, social, and political rights of older persons - not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of justice. In a world where older persons continue to face systemic exclusion from labour markets, digital platforms, and decision-making spaces, the recognition of these rights is urgent and overdue. The IE's analysis reinforces what civil society has long observed - that current protections are fragmented, and many older persons - particularly women, those with disabilities, and those working in informal economies - remain invisible in law and policy. The Federation echoes the IE's conclusion that the time has come for a United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. A convention will consolidate existing standards, affirm the right to work and social protection across the life course, and ensure legal accountability. The UNHRC took a historic step in April by launching the drafting process. The international community shall now move forward with ambition, inclusion, and resolve to build a society for all generations, where dignity knows no age.

The **International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA)** applauds the IE's report on the legal capacity and informed consent as a timely statement in response to the growing assaults on the rights of older persons to make healthcare decisions and exercise legal capacity, especially in structurally coercive environments that may limit older people's exercise of their full legal rights and autonomy. Protecting older persons against discrimination in the social determinants of health and equitable access to quality healthcare, including pain management,



is also a public health priority. The IE calls attention to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that protect older persons with disabilities against denials of legal capacity and informed consent and accord full recognition to rights to involvement in decisions affecting all dimensions of life, including access to health care (inter alia, arts. 25, 29, 34, 3). Threats to older adults posed by systemic ageism and narratives of cognitive loss highlight the intersectionality of ageism and disability and pervasive and virulent forms of discrimination. In closing, INPEA asks for the IE's guidance on how to build upon the provisions of the CRPD in galvanizing the Human Rights Council towards urgent action on a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

**Make Mothers Matter (MMM)** welcomes the IE's report, which rightly highlights gender inequalities in older persons' rights to social protection and work. However, MMM regrets the lack of emphasis on a key root cause - the unequal distribution of unpaid domestic and care work. This gender care gap underpins the gender pay gap and leads to interrupted careers, forced part-time or informal work – all conditions that result in lower income, weaker access to social protection, and reduced pensions for women. Women - especially mothers - are overrepresented among those with 'frequently interrupted working lives'. This must be acknowledged if we are to address the specific discriminations and hurdles faced by mothers -namely the 'motherhood penalty' and its impact on women's economic security in old age. The increased risk of poverty faced by older women is directly linked to a lifetime of disproportionate share of unpaid care work - including caregiving that often continues into old age, as they support older relatives or grandchildren. MMM urges states to recognise, measure and address the motherhood penalty; and build care systems and policies that value and support unpaid care work, and that redistribute it fairly - between men and women, and across society.

**New Humanity** expresses its appreciation for the IE's report, which highlights a worrying situation faced by much of the world's population - older persons. Of particular concern is the conclusion that 'social protection systems tend to fail to meet the needs of older persons in most countries' and that 'pensions are frequently insufficient to ensure an adequate standard of living.' In New Humanity's view, respecting life at every stage also means protecting and supporting the elderly. They are a valuable asset to society as a whole. It is crucial to prevent their marginalisation and ensure they receive adequate social protection. The role of the family as the primary carer must be reinforced, while recognising the responsibility of the state and civil society to provide resources and support networks. For that, New Humanity welcomes the references in the report to the important role families play in caring for dependent older persons. It further acknowledges the vital contribution of cultural and religious associations, which provide material, emotional, social and spiritual support. These associations are key players in ensuring the comprehensive protection of older persons. Finally, New Humanity fully agrees that older people are rights holders, contributors and valuable members of society, and fully supports the IE's recommendation urging states to support the development of an international legally binding instrument to ensure the social protection rights of older persons.

**Sambhali Trust** notes that globally, older persons face discrimination, exclusion, and human rights violations daily. Their vulnerabilities in healthcare, social security, and protection demand urgent attention. Recognizing and safeguarding the identity and inclusion of older persons is critical to uphold their dignity, respect, and rightful place within society. At Sambhali Trust,



respect for the elderly is a cornerstone of its work. While its primary focus has been empowering marginalized women and children through education and support, Sambhali Trust profoundly honours and upholds the dignity of older persons in its programmes. Across all its programmes and community initiatives in Rajasthan, Sambhali Trust integrates elder respect within its social, health, and legal support services. Since inception, over 77,800 individuals, including many elders, have been reached with tailored assistance for their well-being, safety, and empowerment, creating inclusive spaces where elders are always valued and cared for. India also acknowledges the importance of older persons through policies such as the Maintenance and Welfare of Senior Citizens Act, 2007, and the National Policy on Older Persons. These frameworks ensure elder rights to maintenance, healthcare, shelter, and protection against abuse. The government continues expanding welfare schemes such as the *Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana* and the *Elderline helpline* to strengthen elder inclusion and support. Sambhali Trust commends the United Nations for initiating the drafting of an international treaty focussed on the rights of older persons. This initiative promises to unify global standards and catalyse international action. To conclude, Sambhali Trust urges the UN to further strengthen protections and amplify the voices of elders worldwide, ensuring their identity and inclusion are respected in every community.

#### FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

5 Regional and Cross-Regional Groups

33 State Delegations

2 UN Entities

4 National Human Rights Institutions

10 Non-Governmental Organizations