



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



Global
Coalition
on Aging



PERMANENT MISSION OF
CANADA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



MISSION PERMANENTE DU
CANADA
AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES

Concept Note

Ageing and Indigenous Women: Voices, Rights, and Contributions for Sustainable Development

On the Occasion of the *International Day of Older Persons*

Proposed Date and Venue:

October 1, 2025 | Conference Room 5, UN Headquarters
3.00 - 4.00 P.M

Organized by:

Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations

Co-sponsors:

- Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations
- Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) – Programme on Ageing
- Global Coalition on Aging

Background and Rationale

As the world ages at an unprecedented pace, efforts to build inclusive, sustainable societies must place older persons at the center of policy and public life. But ageing is not a singular or uniform experience. For **Indigenous Peoples**, ageing is lived through a unique set of cultural, spiritual, and communal frameworks—ones that often contrast with dominant models that emphasize individualism, productivity, and decline.

In Indigenous worldviews, **growing older is not a process of marginalization, but of deepening relevance**. Older Indigenous women are often **guardians of memory, language, land-based knowledge, and community well-being**. They sustain cultural continuity, uphold resilience in the face of historical and ongoing injustice, and embody alternative ways of ageing—**more communal, more dignified, more resilient**.

Yet despite this richness, the realities of older Indigenous women remain largely invisible in global and national ageing agendas. They often live at the intersection of **multiple and compounding vulnerabilities**, including poverty, exclusion from services, environmental dispossession, and gender-based discrimination. As we look toward the **World Social Summit** and advance the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, the inclusion of their perspectives, priorities, and leadership is not only just—it is transformative.

This event seeks to create a space to recognize, learn from, and engage with older Indigenous women as key actors in shaping development paths that are equitable, sustainable, and rooted in diverse knowledge systems.

Objectives

- To recognize the distinct experiences, contributions, and rights of older Indigenous women within the global ageing agenda.
- To explore Indigenous frameworks of ageing as sources of resilience, sustainability, and community well-being.
- To surface the gaps and challenges that older Indigenous women face, including in access to health, social protection, and participation in decision-making.
- To generate insights and recommendations that inform the World Social Summit and broader global efforts on equity, inclusion, and intergenerational justice.
- To foster dialogue between Indigenous leaders, Member States, youth, and multilateral partners on reimagining ageing through inclusive, rights-based, and culturally grounded lenses.

Provisional Programme

Welcome and Opening Remarks

- **H.E. Ms. Paula Narváez**, Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, Former President of ECOSOC (7 Minutes) **(CONFIRMED)**
- **H.E. Mr. Bob Rae**, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, Former President of ECOSOC (7 Minutes) **(CONFIRMED)**

Panel Discussion: “Intersecting Identities: Ageing, Indigeneity, and Gender in Sustainable Development” (30 Minutes)

Proposed Participants:

- **Ms. Melissa Mitchel**, Representative of the Global Coalition on Aging **(CONFIRMED)**
- **Ms. Mirian Masaquiza Jerez**, Senior Social Affairs Officer, DESA, United Nations **(CONFIRMED)**
- **Ms. Claudia Mahler**, Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons **(CONFIRMED)**
- Moderator: **Amal Abou Rafeh**, Chief, Programme on Ageing Section **(CONFIRMED)**

Launch of Report on Women in the Silver Economy Report

- **Ms. Melissa Mitchel**, Representative of the Global Coalition on Aging **(5 minutes) (CONFIRMED)**

Closing Remarks

- **H.E. Mr. Norberto Moretti**, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations (5 Minutes) **(CONFIRMED)**
- **H.E. Ms. Leonor Zalabata**, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations (5 Minutes) **(CONFIRMED)**

Expected Outcomes

- Increased visibility and recognition of older Indigenous women's contributions to sustainable development and cultural survival.
- Policy messages and recommendations to inform the World Social Summit and ageing-related global frameworks.
- A reaffirmation of the need for intergenerational solidarity and culturally rooted approaches to human development.