



**Statement delivered by the Minister Counsellor, René Ruidiaz Pérez,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations,
on behalf of the Group of Friends of Older Persons**

**At the side-event on occasion of the
2019 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)**

***“Violence Against Older Women,
Time for a global unveiling of the last taboo”***

United Nations Headquarters in New York, Conference Room 11
6 June 2019

Excellencies, distinguished guests, dear colleagues,

It is an honour for me to participate in this event on behalf of the “Group of Friends of Older Persons” at the United Nations in New York. The Group is comprised by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Qatar, Slovenia, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and my own country, Chile.

At the onset, I would like to warmly thank the organizers for convening this event on occasion of the 2019 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day: INPEA, the NGO Committee on Ageing and DESA. The Group of Friends has proudly joined as co-sponsor.

It is worth recalling that the commemoration of this day was officially recognized by the United Nations in 2011, with the purpose to raise the world voices to fight against the abuse and suffering inflicted to older persons. The theme of this year’s observance of the world day: “Access to Justice: Legal, Social and Economics Services for Older Victims of Sexual, Physical and Financial Crimes”, timely remind us that we need to take actions to tackle elder abuse and restore the rights and dignity for all those affected, or at risk.

Distressingly, two decades after the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action and the Beijing plan of action, analysis of inputs submitted to the 8th Session of the Open Ended Working Group on Ageing reveals the gaps remain. Legally binding/effective frameworks for responses such as access to justice and legal remedies, as well as prevention and protection services for older victims of crimes are few to be found.

Elder abuse is a global and growing phenomenon, although its true magnitude is still unknown, due to lack of data, awareness, and underreporting. New estimates from World Health Organization (WHO) indicate that 1 in 6 persons over 60 is suffering from abuse,

this means 141 million people worldwide. This number is alarming and could rise up to 320 million, if no actions are taken, according to the OHCHR.

We need to take actions to combat this serious problem, and for that it is imperative to consider that older persons are specific right-holders who have contributed and continue to play an active role in the many areas of development of our societies.

Dear colleagues,

Men and women experience old age differently. While both older men and older women face age-based discrimination, older women also face the additional cumulative effects of gender-based discrimination throughout their lives. The combination of discrimination on the basis of age and sex puts women at more of a disadvantage in old age than men. Older women continue to suffer from discriminatory laws and practices that render them more vulnerable to abuse and violence. In this sense, we express our deep concern about the fact that neglect, abuse and violence against older women often go undetected.

We consider therefore that it is fundamental, in this regard, to foster the capacity of States to more effectively collect data, statistics and qualitative information, disaggregated by sex, age, and other relevant factors as necessary such as marital status, and disability, in order to better understand the challenges and opportunities presented by population ageing and to provide policymakers with more accurate and more specific information with regard to a gender perspective on ageing.

To conclude,

The Group of Friends reiterates and renews its commitment to promote and ensure the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for older persons, including by taking measures to combat discrimination on the basis of age and sex, as well as neglect, abuse and violence, and to address issues related to social integration.

To ensure the dignity, empowerment, and ability of older persons to fully and effectively enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms, the GoFOP believes that it is crucial to design and implement policies and programmes, as well as devising adequate national, regional and international legal frameworks that effectively and specifically promote the full enjoyment of the human rights of older persons and allow their full social inclusion, without any restrictions and free from all forms of discrimination and violence, being able to actively participate in their societies and contribute to its development.

I would like finally to highlight the valuable efforts by civil society in improving the situation of older persons worldwide and to reiterate that the Group of Friends of Older Persons will continue to work tirelessly to promote the rights of all older persons around the world.

I thank you.