

## Facebook Live Event

### “The Power of Collective Action: Promoting the Rights and Health of Older Persons During the COVID-19 Pandemic”

Tuesday, 28 July 2020 at 10:30-11:30am NY time

(4.30-5.30pm Geneva time)

#### Agenda item:

#### TALKING POINTS FOR INDEPENDENT EXPERT ON THE ENJOYMENT OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS, CLAUDIA MAHLER

- First, I would like to thank the organiser for inviting me in my capacity of the United Nations Independent Expert, mandated by the UN Human Rights Council to work on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons.
- The pandemic exposed dramatic human rights violations which affected older persons disproportionately. Therefore, we have to join our forces to construct a more inclusive society based on non-discrimination and equality, respect for human rights and dignity.
- Older persons are the most heterogeneous age group which means they are not only frail and vulnerable. They made positive contributions during the pandemic as health workers, providing nursing and medical support and attention.
- Ageism and age-discrimination came to light during the pandemic and in the worst cases lead to violence and abuse.
- **Discrimination on the basis of age**, including withholding or refusing the provision of medical treatment based on an age limit or social worth, **is simply prohibited under human rights law.**
- During the pandemic, we witnessed the impact of digital divide where digital exclusion impeded older persons’ access to essential information about the pandemic as well as related health and socio-economic measures.

- Strict isolation rules placed older persons at an increased risk of neglect due to lack of access to medical or social care and other types of support services necessary to live independently.
- The lack of a comprehensive and integrated international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons **continues to have significant practical implications**, including for older persons in emergency situations.
- **I would like to seize this opportunity to call for action.** Older Persons are paying the price for their *invisibility*. We urgently **need a global strategy to safeguard Older Persons during the pandemic**, in recovery and thereafter.
- The **SG's Policy on Older Persons has been a first and crucial step for a joint vision and commitment**, along with the UNFPA Technical Brief, UN DESA's Brief and the many other documents dedicated to Older Persons and COVID-19.
- We need to build on this commitment *towards a Policy Plan and Strategy* that would allow for a systematic approach to older persons, making them visible, working for inclusive equality and integration. Such a *strategy should guide* the UN-system and States in the *implementation of the SDGs* through *age-sensitive* and *older persons' rights programming*.

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