



**INDIA**  
**भारत**

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**STATEMENT BY**  
**MR. AMIT KUMAR, COUNSELLOR**  
**AT THE**  
**THIRD SESSION OF THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL**  
**OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP**  
**ON AGEING**

NEW YORK

AUGUST 21, 2012

**Third Session of the Inter-governmental Open-Ended Working Group  
on Aging (21 August 2012)**

**Statement by Mr. Amit Kumar, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of  
India**

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for chairing the third session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing. We look forward to constructive deliberations under your guidance.

As several delegations have pointed before us, the population of the elderly has been increasing globally, and is projected to increase at a significant rate in the future. This has been a consequence of increased life expectancy, advancement in technology and health systems, and rural migration and increasing urbanization.

These trends have presented significant challenges to policy makers that need to be addressed in a systematic and consistent manner. We are grappling with similar challenges in India as well.

Mr. Chairman,

To address the issues relating to aging, the Government of India has taken a number of steps over the past decade.

In 1999, we first developed a National Policy on Older Persons. This policy mandated State support to ensure financial and food security, health care, shelter and other needs of older persons, equitable share in development, protection against abuse and exploitation, and availability of services to improve the quality of their lives.

The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act enacted in 2007 strengthened the legislative framework in this important area.

As per the national census, the number of 60+ citizens increased from 77 million in 2001 accounting for 7.5% population to 98.5 million in

2011 accounting for 8.3% population. These figures are projected to increase to 173.2 million by 2026 accounting for 12.4% population in India. Accordingly a need was felt to draft a new National Policy on Senior Citizens.

A new draft was prepared in 2011 and posted on the website of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The draft policy is being finalized in consultation with State Governments and other stake holders.

Mr. Chairman,

Our approach has been underpinned by a multi-stakeholder approach to enable elderly persons to lead productive lives. This approach recognises and factors in the need for encouraging individuals to make provision for their own as well as their spouse's old age as well as encouraging families to take care of their older family members.

It also involves cooperation with voluntary and non-governmental organizations to supplement the care provided by the family; providing care and protection to the vulnerable elderly people including legal services; providing adequate healthcare facility; promoting research and training facilities to train geriatric care givers and creating awareness about this issue.

The Government also extends financial assistance for setting up of old age homes, day care centres and mobile medical units; counselling units; regional resource and training centres; and training of caregivers; and formation of senior citizens associations.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has also taken the lead on many important programs, laying emphasis on an integrated scheme for pensions, simpler access to retirement benefits, easier and transparent access to health insurance schemes, travel concessions, extra interest on savings and income tax benefits, etc.

Mr. Chairman,

While the government has taken several important steps, a lot more clearly needs to be done given the scale of the issue. Our approach so far has been sensitive to developments such as the decline of the traditional joint family system in caring for the elderly, the problems faced by elderly

women and the rural population, and the recognition that the elderly can contribute beyond a retirement age to their place of work and their communities.

Mr. Chairman,

As a signatory to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, we are committed to take steps that meet the standards of action upheld in the international plan, and are permitted by the economic capacities of the country.

We recognize the scope of the problem, and appreciate this platform to discuss and act as a global community. We consider it important to continue our national efforts, and to strengthen our endeavours as a global community to ensure the welfare and development of the elderly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

