

**Opening statement by Mr. Ervin Nina, Counsellor  
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the United Nations**

**Open-ended Working Group on Ageing  
for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the  
human rights of older persons**

**5<sup>th</sup> working session, 30 July 2014**

Thank you Mr. Chair,

I would first like to congratulate you on your election as Chair of this session (of the Open Ended Working Group), and we look forward to your leadership in developing clarity and perspective on this topic.

I would further like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election, and would also like to thank the Secretariat for the efforts in making possible this meeting.

We welcome the broad and inclusive participation of civil society organizations in this session and look very much forward to their contribution to the very important issues for discussion.

Our delegation has constructively engaged in the past sessions of the working group, seizing the opportunity to discuss policies, measures and actions to improve the human rights protection of older persons.

We will continue our engagement during this session, with a clear vision to contributing in fulfilling the mandate of the Open-ended Working Group, towards strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons.

Mr. Chair,

The reality is that the global share of older people (aged 60 years or over) increased from 9.2 per cent in 1990 to 11.7 per cent in 2013 and will continue to grow as a proportion of the world population, reaching 21.1 per cent by 2050. Globally, the number of older persons is expected to more than double; from 841 million people in 2013 to more than 2 billion in 2050. By 2050, nearly 8 in 10 of the world's older population will live in the less developed regions.

Albania is not isolated from this demographic reality. As in other parts of the world, the trends in Albania provide for an increase in the ageing population in the years to come.

The demographic share of the elderly in Albania is currently at 11-12% of the population and it is estimated that, in line with the global trend, the ageing population will double in the next 15-20 years. Among major factors contributing to this trend are lower mortality and birth rates, as well as an increase in the average life expectancy.

At any given time in public and non-public centres providing social care for the elderly, including day centres, community and polyvalent centres; there are approximately 1.400 older persons in need of care.

Given the growing trend of increasing demand for residential treatment by the institutions, the strategy to address this issue is based on three main pillars:

- First, the understanding of the important role and responsibility of families towards older generations, a moral obligation, which can provide for a life in dignity and rights for the elderly.
- Second, greater attention by local government for the needs of the elderly.
- Third, establishment of new services for the elderly at home, with mobile teams, which provide for medical and social assistance.

In short, our goal in pursuing those social policies is to build a society for all ages.

Mr. Chair,

Let us not forget that human rights are universal and inalienable and everyone has the right to live free of want and fear. Human rights of older persons are included in the fundamental principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in international human rights instruments of global or regional character.

Older persons have a fundamental right to non-discrimination and the right not to be subject to torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Older persons have the right to participation in the society, right to work, social security, right to food, right to health and housing among other rights.

In today's demographic reality and projections for the future, there is an urgency to address the rights of older persons, in a comprehensive and holistic way; by creating the necessary conditions in every society, conducive to the respect, wellbeing and security of all its members, including older persons.

After four sessions of the Working Group we recognize that serious concerns regarding the situation and the enjoyment of human rights by older persons persist. On this there is I think no need to stress that there is a broad agreement. And I believe we agree on the urgent need for improvement.

Mr. Chair,

During last year's deliberations in the Working Group we highlighted the need for increased focus on age as a specific perspective and its mainstreaming through the work of the Commission on Social Development, human rights treaty bodies, special procedures and in particular the Universal Periodic Review as an added value and worth of further exploring.

We also voiced support the establishment of a special procedure and we welcome the appointment, last May, of Ms. Rosita Kornfeld-Matte (from Chile) as Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Older Persons.

We look forward to working with her, in the context of her mandate, to *inter alia*, work in close coordination, while avoiding unnecessary duplication with the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing. She can count on our support in the discharge of her important duties and expectations placed on the mandate, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 24/20.

In concluding, allow me to reiterate Mr. Chair, as pointed out the previous sessions, that we need to ensure a regular, meaningful discussion within the United Nations on issues related to ageing, including through the Commission on Social Development, human rights treaty bodies, special procedures and in particular the Universal Periodic Review.

We welcome in this context the fact that the 2014 Social Forum, which took place earlier in April in Geneva, in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 24/25, focused on the rights of older persons, including best practices in this regard.

We hope this session will build on previous sessions in highlighting opportunities to strengthen the implementation of existing standards. We further hope this session will also come up with a strong call to action for all of us to do more, in addressing the identified shortcomings and identifying ways to strengthen the protection of the human rights of older persons.

We also urge all UN agencies to contribute in fully implementing the Madrid plan of Action at the national, regional and international level.

I thank you.

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