

(Check against delivery)



BRAZIL

**Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing
Fifth Session – 30 July - 1 August 2014**

Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations

30 July, 2014



Mr. Chairman,

Please allow me to congratulate the Mission of Argentina for your commitment to advance this theme at the UN and engagement at the Chairmanship of the Working Group since its first Session, held in 2011.

Mr. Chairman,

2. The rapid growth of the world population of older persons is one of the most significant demographic trends of our days. Many countries face challenges stemming from the rising numbers of their elderly. Currently, above 20 million persons are aged 60 and over in Brazil. They account for roughly 11% of the Brazilian population. This percentage of older persons is expected to grow to an impressive figure of 28% in 2040.

3. To meet these challenges, Brazil has modernized its legislation and implemented specific public policies. The Brazilian Statute of Older Persons, adopted in 2003, incorporates the dispositions of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Political Declaration. This institutional framework focus on the elderly as subjects of rights rather than assisted citizens.

4. Following the "Nothing About Us Without Us" principle, Brazil has adopted an inclusive and participatory approach. The National Council for the Rights of Older Persons, which is directly linked to the Secretariat for Human Rights of the Presidency of the Republic, is one example. It is integrated by representatives from civil society, who continuously monitor the implementation of policies, assess the progress achieved and provide the Government with inputs on how the remaining challenges regarding policies for older persons can be met.

5. Last year, as a result of a 6-year tireless effort, the Human Rights Council adopted by consensus a decision to create a mandate for an independent expert on the rights of older persons. This decision, proposed by Brazil and Argentina, gives life to one of the two

main outcomes of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, which are the creation of a special procedure to monitor and promote the rights of older persons and consultations with a view to elaborating a UN Convention on the matter. It is a significant step towards the inclusion, on a more permanent basis, of the human rights of this segment of the world population in the international agenda.

6. Consistent with its participation in the Open-Ended Working Group, Brazil also participates in the regional discussions on the issue of the rights of older persons. There has been strong mobilization on the matter within the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Organization of American States. Within Mercosur, a Working Group on the Rights of Older Persons was established in 2009.

7. At the OAS, Brazil is engaged in the negotiation on an Inter-American Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. It is expected that these negotiations be concluded by the next OAS General Assembly meeting, to be held in June 2015. In our view, both processes - at the regional, at the OAS, and international, at the UN, are complementary to each other. And the negotiations at the OAS should not preclude us from internationally protecting, at the UN, the rights of these citizens.

8. As we debate this issue, we should remind ourselves that, not long ago, negotiations of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities faced the same opposition we see today against the negotiation of a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. Many of the arguments presented a decade ago are the very same put forth today. Notwithstanding this, 147 countries have ratified the former and it stands as a landmark in the fight for equality of opportunities, protection and promotion of rights of persons with disabilities throughout the world.

9. In discussing the need for an international instrument on the human rights of older persons, we should bear in mind that by 2050, more than 20 per cent of the world's population will be 60 years of age or older. The increase in the number of older persons will be most significant and rapid in the developing world. For this reason, we should also

work to make the inclusion of the human rights of older persons an integral aspect of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

10. The Government of Brazil considers the advancement of negotiations on an international convention on the rights of older persons within the United Nations of utmost importance. As indicated in reports by the United Nations High Commissioner's Office and of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, there is a clear gap with regard to the human rights of older persons in the existing international framework. Explicit references to ageing and the rights of older persons in core international human rights treaties are still scarce.

11. From Brazil's perspective, older persons are not a vulnerable group "per se" but a group subject to vulnerabilities due to situations of abuse and violence, discrimination based on "ageism" and the social construction of old age, including stereotypes, prejudices, stigma, abandonment, isolation, poverty and difficult access to services.

12. For these reasons, we believe the implementation of an international binding instrument would strengthen monitoring and defense of the rights of older persons, would foster the national policies for this segment of the population and would better define the responsibilities of States. We are convinced that the adoption of a comprehensive international convention to protect and promote the rights of older persons would contribute to redressing the profound social disadvantage of older persons and promote their equal participation in the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural life, in both developing and developed countries.

Thank you.

