



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY  
VÉRIFIER AU PRONONCÉ

STATEMENT BY  
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OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON AGEING

NEW YORK, 30 JULY 2014



DÉCLARATION DE  
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GROUPE DE TRAVAIL À COMPOSITION NON LIMITÉE SUR LE  
VIEILLISSEMENT

NEW YORK, LE 30 JUILLET 2014

Merci monsieur le president,

Canada is pleased to participate in this fifth session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing.

Having actively participated in every session of this working group, Canada is determined to promote the human rights of older persons through both domestic measures and the UN system. Canada remains committed to helping seniors maintain a quality of life, be active members of their communities, and ensure their well-being and safety.

The rights of older persons are often raised in UN resolutions, and relevant international instruments including the *Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing*.

The rights of older persons must receive the same attention as all human rights, and the protection and implementation is equally important. Tangible actions are necessary to address persistent gaps in information, knowledge, implementation and monitoring.

Like many countries, Canada's population is ageing. Immediate steps and action are required, not only to assist older persons presently, but to prepare for the demographic pressures that we will face in the longer-term in Canada and around the world.

The needs are real, action is necessary and the solutions need to be timely, significant, sustainable, and must make use of the available resources in an efficient and uncompromising manner.

Real progress will require the inclusion of stakeholders who understand the issues affecting older persons, their communities and the support networks that can improve their living conditions. The Member States' governments must therefore improve their policies and programs, which are the most effective tools we have for making real improvements.

It is important to reflect that human rights are inclusive, indivisible and interdependent, and that no human right guaranteed by international treaty is subject to an expiry date based on a person's age. Human rights belong to and are to be enjoyed by all human beings without distinction of any kind. On this front, Canada firmly believes that the human rights of older persons must be ensured. In other words, human rights belong to everyone wherever they are because they are human beings endowed with dignity. Governments must therefore "fully commit to their responsibility to uphold existing human rights.

We believe that the option of a new international convention on the human rights of older persons is not currently supported by a broad consensus for several reasons, including:

- New conventions are to be reserved solely for the resolution of obvious and significant gaps in the human rights system;

- The desire to dedicate resources to the implementation of human rights and not to the lengthy negotiation of a document;
- The anticipation that a new convention will duplicate the work being done by other conventions; and
- Concerns that a new convention would apply more pressure on a monitoring system that is already overburdened.

However, through strengthening and better utilizing existing mechanisms in place, such as the Universal Periodic Review, and building on the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, Member States can enhance their implementation of human rights for older persons. Moreover, we hope that the post-2015 development agenda will include an emphasis on the human rights of all including older persons.

Mr. Chair, we are pleased to be here, taking part in these discussions. The well-being and security of seniors are a priority for Canada. Over the course of the next three days, we look forward to learning from other Member States and their best practices with respect to the promotion and protection of older persons including their care; preventing violence and abuse; how to strengthen the human rights of older persons through the MIPAA; and the inclusion of older persons in the post-2015 development agenda.

We hope that discussions will focus on available solutions and that in a year's time, we can all report on progress on the ground.

Merci monsieur le président, et je vous remercie pour votre attention.