



**PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**  
**MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**Statement by Counsellor Yao Shaojun of the Chinese  
Mission to United Nations at the General Debate  
at the Fifth Session of the GA Open-Ended  
Working Group on Ageing**

**(July 30, 2014, New York)**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you on your election as the chairman of the working group. I am convinced that this session will achieve positive results under your able leadership. I would also like to welcome to our meeting Ms. Kornfeld-Matte, Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons.

The open-ended working group has held four sessions and conducted deep-going discussions on a series of issues such as how to respond to the phenomenon of aging and how to safeguard the rights and interests of older persons. China appreciates the work done and wishes to make the following observations:

First, all stakeholders should be mobilized and multiple initiatives should be taken. Achieving development is the foundation for the resolution of issues related to aging. Governments should play the leading role, increase policy support and guidance in this respect, and incorporate the issue of aging in the overall plan for economic and social development, while taking into full consideration the special needs of older persons in areas of poverty eradication, medical care, social protection and voluntary employment. Various governmental departments should strengthen coordination to form synergy. Meanwhile, it is also necessary to tap the potentials of civil society, the private sector and the family in meeting the needs of older persons. The role of the

market should be given full play to improve the service system for older persons and develop service industry in this field.

Secondly, national conditions should be respected and relevant measures should conform to local situations. It is the common goal of all countries to protect the rights and interests of older persons. At the same time, efforts to address the issue of the aging are closely linked to the path and stage of development of specific countries. Since countries differ in terms of both the level of economic and social development and historical and cultural traditions, they face different challenges and problems. Efforts to address the challenges of aging should be based on each country's national conditions and level of development, and advance the protection of the rights and interests of older persons with a step by step approach. It is undesirable to adopt a "one size fits all" mode.

Thirdly, international cooperation needs to be reinforced. Promotion and protection of the rights and interests of older persons are continuous endeavors with no completion date. While all countries face the problem of aging to some degree, the developing countries find themselves in a particularly disadvantaged situation in responding to the challenge of aging. All countries should strengthen cooperation and make joint efforts so that older persons can enjoy a happy life in our global village. The international community should pay attention to the special difficulties facing the developing countries and provide financial and technical assistance to them. China supports the idea that the special needs of older persons should be given due consideration in the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Fourthly, in-depth consultations are needed to forge consensus. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing provides guidance to countries in tackling the issue of aging. With the three identified priority areas in this document covered all the fields of work related to older persons, and it is of great significance even today and needs to be effectively and comprehensively implemented by countries. The working group should, within the mandate given by the GA, continue to push for the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action and study questions such as the world trend of aging, current mechanisms of protection and their deficiencies. In view of the serious divergence of views on drafting a new international legal instrument, we need to keep patience, take step by step approach, and conduct consultations on equal footing with a view to narrowing differences and expanding common understanding.

Mr. Chairman,

The Chinese nation has inherited from ancient times the good tradition of respecting, supporting and helping the elderly. China has now entered the stage of fast population aging. Till the end of 2013, our population of 60 years and older reached 202.43 million which makes up 14.9% of the total population. The Chinese government pays great attention to the question of aging and has set responding to the question of aging as a long term strategic task of the nation. A series of measures aimed at eliminating discrimination against older persons and safeguarding their legitimate rights and interests have been taken. We have established a legal system with the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly as the centerpiece, implemented multiple development plans for the benefit of the elderly, and set up committees on aging at various levels from the central government to the local administration. We have further improved our basic pension insurance system, basic medical insurance system and the system of social security. The third plenary session of the 18<sup>th</sup> Chinese Communist Party Central Committee held at the end of last year made a clear decision to actively respond to the aging of the population, expedite the establishment of a social service system for the caring of the elderly and develop service industry targeting the elderly, and improve the service system that cares for the elderly who are left behind in rural areas. Right now, we are working actively to implement those decisions. At the same time, we highly value the contribution of the elderly to the society and are working to create conditions for them to make such contributions, including considering a progressive extension of retirement age.

China will continue to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with the international community and promote the coordinated development of the cause of the elderly with that of the economy and society, thus contributing positively to the efforts of the international community to address the ageing issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

