



INDIA
भारत

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STATEMENT BY
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MINISTER
AT THE
FIFTH WORKING SESSION
OF THE
INTER-GOVERNMENTAL OPEN-ENDED
WORKING GROUP ON AGEING

NEW YORK

JULY 30, 2014



Mr. Chairman,

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

Mr. Chairman,

Advances in medicine, technology, improved socio-economic conditions, better food availability and nutrition levels, improved access to quality health care and safer working conditions have all led to demographic shifts with significant increase in ageing populations globally.

In India, population of older persons is projected to increase at a much faster rate than the overall population. The National Policy on Senior Citizens (2011) reckons that by 2050, there will be over 300 million persons in India above the age of 60 years accounting for almost 20% of the population.

In India, joint families had traditionally offered the most vital non-formal social security arrangement for older persons. This shift in demographic ageing presents new challenges for policy makers particularly in the backdrop of work-related migration and changes in family structure towards more nuclear families. Old structures of care and belonging are consequently being reshaped.

Mr. Chairman,

As many delegations have previously pointed out, older persons face particular social and economic vulnerabilities. My delegation would like to, therefore, stress that it is important that we continue to recognize older persons as valued members of our societies, and not merely as objects of our care and welfare.

It is with this approach in mind that the government and all stakeholders need to work together to promote the dignity and well being of older persons. Although the government should take the lead in this regard, the society also has a pivotal role to play. Families and communities need to step in.

Mr. Chairman,

Through legislative measures and policy reforms, India has undertaken a number of steps to safeguard the dignity of older persons particularly in the context of identified priority areas of the Madrid International Plan of Action.

Taking cognizance of the multiple dimensions of the challenges faced by older persons, the Government of India has adopted a multi-stakeholder approach that include innovative partnerships with NGOs, local bodies, communities, etc.

Our approach also does not view older persons as one large homogenous group, and is sensitive to the specific needs of elderly women, and older persons living in rural areas.

Mr. Chairman,

A National Policy on Older Persons was launched in 2000, which was revised in 2011. This policy mandated state support for older persons in areas of financial security, health care, shelter, protection against abuse and exploitation, to improve the quality of their lives.

The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act enacted in 2007 provides the necessary legal framework for the protection of life and property of senior citizens, better medical facilities and setting up of old age homes in every district.

The National Programme for Health Care of Elderly provides preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative services for older persons through health care facilities run by health care professionals especially trained to respond to the specific needs of older persons.

Grant-in-aid schemes are in place to provide financial assistance to establish and maintain old age homes, recreation centers, mobile medicare units, help lines, physiotherapy centers and mental healthcare facilities.

Pension schemes, free legal aid services insurance coverage schemes and other facilities such as higher rates of interest on saving, tax rebates, and reduced banking charges are also available for older persons.

The government constantly reviews implementation of various initiatives to build upon and improve existing services for older persons.

Mr. Chairman,

We will continue to actively participate in the discussions of the working group and at other UN forums on this important issue.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm India's unwavering commitment to uphold the dignity and well being of the elderly.
