



**Statement of
the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Before
The Fifth Working Session
of the Open Working Group on Ageing**

**Delivered by
Second Secretary
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Unofficial Translation

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Mr. President,

The Delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is pleased to congratulate your Excellency and the members of your Bureau on your election to conduct the work of this session. Our Delegation reassures its confidence that your leadership to the work of this session will lead us to achieve many of the desired results.

Mr. President,

The commitment of Saudi Arabia to the 2002 Political Declaration and Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing remains a commitment which requires us and the entire international community to continue to work hard to ensure the activation of all rights of the elderly of both sexes; and to ensure they are implemented in all economic, political, social, and cultural fields. In addition, we all should strive to proceed with national, regional, and international efforts aiming for the full implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing.

Mr. President,

Looking at the international legitimacy on human rights, we will find that none of its instruments refers explicitly to **age** as a prohibited ground of discrimination. At the same time, the incidents of discrimination endured by the elderly remain hidden. This is due to the absence of a comprehensive international convention concerning the elderly, which in turn, will help to unify the existing international standards regarding the rights of the elderly and will encourage a fair and equitable allocation of their required resources.

In this sense, the Saudi Government has given special attention to highlighting the issues of the elderly, expanding national policies dedicated to improve their status, and strengthening their role within their families to ultimately become fully integrated in their societies. In this regard, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has enacted several national legislations and social laws such as the laws of Social Security, the Law of Public Assistance, the Labor law, the Law of Public service, and other laws that contribute to the provision of care in time of crises and disasters. In addition, the Kingdom enacted other laws dedicated to improve the cultural and educational level of the elderly, such as the laws on literacy and adult education. The main objective of these social laws is to provide legal safeguards to counter the effects of ageing, to ensure the social and economic security for the elderly, to enable them to live and participate in public life according to their own abilities, and to obtain the necessary services according to their needs on the basis of equality and non-discrimination.

Mr. President,

Article X of the Statute of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia determined that "*The State is keen to strengthen family ties and to preserve its Arab and Islamic values, to provide care for all of*



In this context, allow me, Mr. President, to mention some of the Kingdom's efforts and achievements related to the care dedicated to the elderly in many areas:

Firstly: Social Insurance: This system is concerned about laborers as it deducts from their salary a monthly amount equal to 18%; 9% to be paid by the employer and 9% to be paid by the insured laborer and, accordingly, any benefits of the insured are paid directly by the Saudi General Organization for Social Insurance. Moreover, this Law granted the elderly a monthly stipend for life called (**Geriatric Stipend**) if the person reaches the age of sixty. Moreover, this stipend should be passed to their heirs after their death.

Secondly: Social Security: This system is concerned about many other segments of the society with a view to improve their living and alleviate some of the difficulties they encounter in their lives. This system focuses on regulating the benefits allocated to help families and individuals benefiting from Social Security.

Thirdly: Retirement Act: The Retirement Act is considered an economical-insurance system for both sexes who reached the age of sixty or became unable to work. This means that the State is obligated to ensure an income for the employee who quit his job because of old age or disability, regardless of the amounts deducted during his governmental employment. In this regard, **the Royal Decree No. 19 of 2004** was issued mandating the establishment of a national committee overseeing the elderly affairs, chaired by H.E. the Minister of Social Affairs and with the membership of thirteen representatives from the government and civil society. Among the committees' assignments are developing plans, preventive measures, and awareness programs aimed at meeting all requirements of the elderly.

Mr. President,

The elderly care is provided in the Kingdom in form of governmental care and civil-society's care. Governmental care undertakes sheltering every needy citizen who reaches 60 years or older without distinction; especially the ones who became disabled, unable to accommodate themselves, or have no family to look after their needs. It also provides them with social welfare, medical, and psychological treatment inside shelters; in addition to cultural activities, entertainment, and sports chosen by the elderly.

As for the civil-society's care, the Ministry of Social Affairs encourages individual and collective social and charity work. Moreover, the Ministry systematized all efforts dedicated to volunteer work through the establishment of several boards mandated to oversee the charity organizations' financial and administrative matters.

Mr. President,

In the recent decades, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has witnessed tremendous progress in diagnosis and treatment fields. The Kingdom has established the "**Home Health Care Program**" which mainly works on identifying the degree of disability and functional limitations of the elderly of both sexes and, accordingly, provides the necessary in-home rehabilitative, curative, and preventive services needed by the elderly. Ultimately, the beneficiary and his/her family will be trained on how to fulfill these services in order to achieve independence and self-reliance as much as possible.

In conclusion, Mr. President.

Our Prophet peace be upon him said; "He is not one of us who have no mercy on our little ones and respect our old ones."

The principles of our Islamic Shariaa make it mandatory on all of us to take care of the elderly regardless of religion, gender, color, or race; to deal with them with extreme compassion, and to never neglect the protection of their rights. Thus, it is worth noting that before taking the principles of the Political Declaration on Ageing into consideration, the teachings of our Islamic Shariaa indeed guaranteed this category's rights to the fullest.

Thank you, Mr. President.

