

**Open-ended Working Group on Ageing
for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the
human rights of older persons**

**4th working session, 12-15 August 2013
Opening statement - Albania**

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

At the outset I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chair of this session of the Open Ended Working Group, and we look forward to your leadership and the active role of your delegation on this important topic. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election and would also like to thank the Secretariat for their efforts in making possible this meeting.

Mr. Chair,

As in previous years, we have looked forward to constructively engage in this meeting as an opportunity to discuss policies, measures and actions to improve the human rights protection of older persons. We also welcome the broad and inclusive participation of civil society organizations in this session.

As in other parts of the world, the trends in Albania provide for an increase in the ageing population in the years to come. It is estimated that the ageing population will be doubled in the next 15-20 years. Among major factors contributing to these trends are lower mortality and also birth rates, as well as an increase in the average life expectancy.

Fully aware of these challenges, including the human rights dimension of the ageing societies, we have embarked on a process of discussions, with the involvement of relevant stakeholders at all levels, on a draft-law, "On the care for older persons". The preliminary conclusion that can be drawn from these discussions is that there are indeed no major legal gaps as regards the rights of older persons, even though there are some deficiencies. It is expected that the draft will be considered by the Parliament in the fourth quarter of 2013.

Mr. Chair,

The 2nd global review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was conducted earlier this year during the 51st session of the Commission on Social Development.

The report of the Secretary-General, assessing the second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (para 84) states that "it is evident that, 10 years after its adoption, the Madrid Plan of Action has made only limited headway in national and international development plans."

This is yet another clear indication that we should fully explore the possibilities and make better use of the existing legal frameworks and mechanisms. It is evident that we must continue to

focus our efforts on the effective implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action, which we must not forget; it was endorsed by more than 150 Member States.

We hope therefore that this session will build on the Madrid plan of Action, highlighting opportunities to strengthen the implementation of existing standards. We further hope that this session will also come up with a strong call to action for all of us to do more, in addressing the shortcomings identified in the report of the Secretary-General. We urge all UN agencies to contribute in fully implementing the Madrid plan of Action at the national, regional and international level.

Mr. Chair,

After three sessions of the Working Group we recognize that there are indeed serious concerns regarding the situation and the enjoyment of human rights by older persons, on which there seems to be broad agreement. And I believe we agree on the urgent need for improvement.

We should build on this critical mass and rather than focusing our efforts on issues on which not all share the same opinion, we should be able to focus our efforts on ways and means to achieve better implementation of the existing instruments. We share the opinion that the implementation of existing standards would effectively address "the protection gaps in practice".

In concluding Mr. Chair, allow me to reiterate, as pointed out last year, that we need to ensure a regular, meaningful discussion within the United Nations on ageing issues, including through the Commission on Social Development, human rights treaty bodies, special procedures and in particular the Universal Periodic Review.

I thank you Chair.