



**INDIA**  
**भारत**

*Please check against delivery*

**STATEMENT**  
**BY**  
**MR. DEVESH UTTAM, FIRST SECRETARY**  
**AT THE FOURTH WORKING**  
**SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL**  
**OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP**  
**ON AGEING**

**NEW YORK**

**AUGUST 12, 2013**

**Mr. Chairman,**

Thank you for chairing the fourth session of the open-ended Working Group on Ageing. We are confident that under your guidance, we will make progress in our deliberations.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We recognize that population ageing is one of the most significant demographic changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Increased longevity is a direct consequence of unprecedented advances in technology and medicine as well as steadily improving socio-economic conditions particularly in terms of food availability, better nutrition, improved access to better health-care and safer working conditions.

At the same time, shift in economic structures has led to significant work-related migration and changes in family structure towards more nuclear families. In this backdrop, an ageing population poses fresh challenges to policy makers. India is home to over 100 million old persons and this population segment is expected to increase faster than the average population rate. It is estimated that at its current rate, India's elderly population will double in 20 years.

**Mr. Chairman,**

It is evident that old persons are vulnerable in several respects on account of their age, even when they may be financially independent. Physical infirmity leads to dependence in various forms on others – be it family members or care givers. The challenge for policy makers is to ensure that older persons live a life of dignity and fulfillment through provision of appropriate policy and legal framework.

Equally, however, there is a need to acknowledge the social dimension of the issue and the need for immediate and extended families and the community to step in. It is an issue of inter-generational social compact. Just as parents provide for their children, the children need to take care of and support their parents when they grow old. It is simply inconceivable that the government can alone address this issue if the families and communities do not play their part.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In India, the government has adopted a multi-stakeholder approach in addressing issues related to the ageing population. The government, through its various schemes, has collaborated with other partners such as NGOs, local bodies and the community in ensuring that the elderly not only live longer but also lead a secure, dignified and productive life.

The National Policy on Older Persons addresses the requirements of financial security, health care and nutrition, shelter and appropriate financial incentives and discounts to senior citizens. This policy is presently being reviewed in consultation with all stakeholders to plug gaps and improve policy implementation.

The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007 provides for the protection of life and property of senior citizens, better medical facilities and setting up of old age homes in every district. Pension schemes, free legal aid services and insurance coverage schemes are also available to assist senior citizens.

The National Programme for Health Care of Elderly provides for improved health services by setting up geriatric units around the country as well as special clinics for the elderly in government run hospitals.

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.

Several facilities are also available to the elderly including subsidized travel on public transportation, prioritization of their legal cases, higher rates of interest on savings, reduced banking charges, tax rebates, etc.

**Mr. Chairman,**

India is a signatory to the Madrid International Plan on Ageing. We will actively participate in the discussions of the working group and at the UN on this important issue.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm India's full commitment to safeguard the dignity and well-being of the elderly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

\*\*\*\*\*