



## **HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF ECOSOC, 19 July 2019**

### **EMPOWERING PEOPLE AND ENSURING INCLUSIVENESS AND EQUALITY: LONG TERM TRENDS AND SCENARIOS**

I represent the Stakeholder Group on Ageing. Our role is to ensure that older persons and their concerns are included in implementation of the SDGs at national, regional and global levels.

The world's population is ageing. Currently 962 million of the global population are aged 60 and above. This number is projected to rise to 1.4 billion by 2030, representing 16.5% of the total population. The number of older persons is growing faster than all younger age groups. In 2018, for the first time in history, persons aged 65 years or over worldwide outnumbered children under the age of 5. By 2050, nearly 8 in 10 of the world's older persons will be living in developing countries. Older women outnumber older men.

Anticipating this demographic shift is essential if countries are to meet the SDGs and leave no one behind. As the age of populations rise, Governments must ensure policies address the needs of older persons, enabling them to live autonomous and dignified lives.

The most frequent concerns raised by older persons, including in my country, Cameroon, are:

- Violations of their human rights;
- Ageism – prejudice and discrimination at individual and institutional levels;
- Insufficient opportunities for lifelong learning, decent work and employment;
- Lack of adequate and affordable health care services, including long-term and palliative care;

- Elder abuse and neglect, including financial abuse;
- Accusations of witchcraft;
- No social protection and social security;
- Absence of property rights.

**Because of the long-term demographic trends, we urge governments to:**

1. Pay serious attention to the implications of an ageing population;
2. Recognize that older persons are not a heterogenous group – some are active and independent, but others are vulnerable and in need of help;
3. Combat discriminatory laws and practices, including removing age caps from international surveys;
4. Take a life-course approach in all policies and programmes so that no one is left behind;
5. Ratify the AU protocol and support efforts to elaborate a global convention to protect the rights of older persons.

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