**41st session of the Human Rights Council**

**Annual thematic panel discussion on technical cooperation**

**in the promotion and protection of human rights  
*Theme: Technical cooperation and capacity-building***

***in the field of the human rights of older persons***

*Concept note (draft as of 10 July 2019)*

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| **Date and venue:** | **10 July 2019, 9 – 11 a.m., Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva** *(will be broadcast live and archived on http://webtv.un.org)* |
| **Objectives:** | The panel discussion aims to facilitate exchange of views to strengthen technical cooperation and capacity-building activities to support States’ efforts to promote and protect the human rights of older persons and their autonomy and independence, and address implementation gaps in national legislations, policies and programmes, including where applicable those relating to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), income security, the promotion of active and healthy ageing, the use of assistive technology, access to information and lifelong learning, combatting all forms of discrimination against older persons, paying particular attention to older women and supporting the full integration of older persons in society and access to care, health and support services for older persons in their communities. |
| **Chair:** | **H.E. Ms. Nazhat Shameem Khan**, Vice-President of the Human Rights Council |
| **Opening statement:** | **Ms. Kate Gilmore**, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| **Moderator:** | **H.E. Mr. Sek Wannamethee**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva |
| **Panellists:** | **Mr. Antônio Fernandes Toninho Costa**,National Secretary for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Older Persons, Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights, Brazil  **Dr. Ruediger Krech**, Director of the Department of Health Promotion, World Health Organization  **Ms. Shaikha Ahmed Al Horeb**, Head of Implementation and Follow-up Section, Department of Social Awareness and Communication, The Centre for Elderly Empowerment and Care (Ehsan), Qatar |
| **Outcome:** | The expected outcomes of this thematic discussion are as follows:   * States and other stakeholders will learn from shared experiences in implementing technical cooperation and capacity building activities on human rights of older persons. * Key protection gaps and needs of older persons will be identified, as well as possible measures to address them through technical cooperation and capacity building. * States and other relevant stakeholders will be better informed of the technical capacities and expertise available in the United Nations system and other actors in this area. * A set of recommended actions will be identified to further enhance technical cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights of older persons. |
| **Mandate:** | Since 2012, the Human Rights Council has been holding annual thematic discussions to promote the sharing of experiences and best practices and technical cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights, in accordance with Council resolution 18/18. In its resolution 39/18, the Council decided that “Technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of the human rights of older persons” would be the theme of the annual thematic panel discussion to be held during the forty-first session of the Council in 2019. To serve as a basis for discussion, OHCHR has prepared a report entitled “Activities undertaken by the Office and relevant United Nations country teams and agencies, and regional organizations to support States’ efforts to promote and protect the human rights of older persons and their autonomy and independence” (A/HRC/41/32). |
| **Format:** | The panel discussion will be limited to two hours. The opening statement and initial presentations by the panellists, the latter guided by the moderator, will be followed by an interactive discussion divided into two slots and chaired by the Vice-President of the Human Rights Council.  A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, including the opening statement, moderator’s introduction, panellists’ presentations, responses to questions and concluding remarks. The remaining hour will be reserved for interventions from the floor, divided into two slots, for States and observers (2x12), national human rights institutions (2x1) and non-governmental organizations (2x2).  The list of speakers for the discussion will be established at the beginning of the panel and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups of States will be moved to the beginning of the list. Each speaker will have two minutes to raise issues and to ask questions. To make the panel interactive, participants are encouraged to share concrete proposals and considerations concerning the human rights of older persons, as well as challenges faced and lessons learned at national and regional levels. Interpretation will be provided in the six United Nations official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish). |
| **Background:** | The ongoing demographic transformation makes it urgent to ensure that older persons, who are becoming an increasing part of the population of our societies, can fully participate in all spheres of social life. Older persons are all too often subjected to discrimination, neglect, exclusion and other human rights violations, and the international community has not paid sufficient attention to these obstacles to their full enjoyment of human rights. Older persons’ participation in social and economic life may also be hindered because of prevailing negative images of the aged. Despite these realities, the visibility of older persons in the field of human rights is still very low. Many of the specific claims of older persons are simply not mentioned in international human rights instruments. National standards are often weak or completely absent regarding age discrimination, an adequate standard of living, support for autonomy, participation in decision making, and freedom from violence, abuse and neglect.  With their lifelong skills and experience, older persons have the potential to make significant contributions to our society and economy, individually and through families and communities. Technical cooperation and capacity building play a critical role in enabling older persons to continue to contribute to our society, and in fulfilling the promise of leaving no one behind in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report of the Office of the High Commissioner has highlighted the role that the United Nations system has played in facilitating the sharing of experience among countries, including through South-South and triangular cooperation, in addressing the challenges and protection gaps of older persons. At the same time, much more efforts are necessary to further mainstream and raise the visibility of human rights of older persons in the United Nations system in order to provide more coherent and coordinated support. The findings of this report indicate the need for further development of normative standards and operational guidance to close the protection gaps regarding older persons, as well as a shift to ensure their full and meaningful participation in the identification, design and implementation of technical cooperation and capacity building activities in the field of the human rights of older persons, as rights-holders and active agents of change. |
| **Possible key questions to be addressed:** | * What are the existing technical cooperation and capacity-building activities undertaken by the OHCHR, the World Health Organization, the United Nations country teams and other agencies within the United Nations system to promote and protect the human rights of older persons, including healthy and active ageing? * What are the existing technical cooperation and capacity-building activities being carried out between States, including South-South cooperation, at the bilateral, regional and international levels, to advance the rights of older persons? * What are the main challenges/gaps in these technical cooperation activities? What are the specific areas and opportunities for further enhancement of technical cooperation that will better serve the needs of older persons? * How do we enhance the effectiveness and coherence of the technical cooperation activities across the United Nations system, so that they are aligned with the SDGs, national development objectives, and national policies relating to the rights of older persons? In particular, what role could the United Nations country teams and Resident Coordinators play in supporting governments and other national stakeholders in the implementation of policies and measures relating to the rights of older persons? * How do technical cooperation activities promote the participation of older persons and older persons’ organizations in the design and implementation of these activities? |
| **Background documents:** | * Human Rights Council resolution [39/18](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/39/18) of 28 September 2018 on the enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of human rights * Report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the activities undertaken by the Office and relevant United Nations country teams and agencies, and regional organizations to support States’ efforts to promote and protect the human rights of older persons and their autonomy and independence ([A/HRC/41/32](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/41/32)) * Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Economic and Social Council ([E/2012/51](https://undocs.org/e/2012/51)) on the human rigths of older persons * Comprehensive report of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons ([A/HRC/33/44](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/33/44)) |