**Human Rights Council Multi-stakeholder meeting on the human rights of older persons**

**Closing remarks by Peggy Hicks, Director of the Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures and Right to Development Division at the**

**Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

**30 August 2022**

**Closing segment 5’ (16:45 – 17:00 CET)**

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, friends

I am delighted to be with you for the closing session of this multi-stakeholder meeting. I am here on behalf of the High Commissioner, who joined you at the opening session and who asked me to extend to you her greetings and highest appreciation once again.

I would like to thank you all for the constructive and useful dialogue these past two days, which will inform OHCHR’s summary report of this meeting that will be submitted to the 52nd session of the Human Rights Council next year.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the Permanent Missions of Slovenia and Argentina for their crucial leadership in advancing discussions on the human rights of older persons in the context of the Human Rights Council.

This meeting was an important opportunity to exchange on the efforts needed to accelerate progress towards building stronger legal frameworks at both national and international levels to protect the human rights of older persons, as the Secretary-General called for at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 in his Policy Brief on older persons. He called for progress on developing proposals for an international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons. This message has been clearly echoed in this meeting, including by the High Commissioner and the Under-Secretary-General.

We have a lot to learn, for example, from the experience of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and how the adoption of a dedicated instrument has been a catalyser for societal changes and reforms in laws and policies at different levels in countries, and is ultimately contributing to better protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

The Human Rights Council, with its human rights expertise, plays a crucial role in ensuring better protection of the rights of older persons. Throughout the meeting, we have heard proposals that would allow the Council to remain seized of this important matter, such as through the establishment of a permanent regular discussion and exchange, for instance **a standing item on the Council sessions’ agenda**; a subsidiary body; regional workshops; or thematic consultations that would feed into the work of the Council. Other proposals included that the Council develop a way to work on elements, or agreed language, of an international legal instrument.

**We have heard a strong call for enhanced coordination between the Human Rights Council and the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing in New York, the need for strengthened coordination among all member states, particularly through the Permanent Missions in Geneva and New York. We also need better coordination among all human rights mechanisms on the rights of older persons**. And crucially, in all these processes, the active and meaningful participation of civil society is paramount – **also to address the diverse ageing experiences and intersectional and multiple discrimination that older persons face.**

Our Office stands ready to support such processes as it has done in the past on other human rights issues.

Our Office has already conducted a number of studies on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons and the existing protection gaps, that can contribute to these processes. Similarly, the Open-Ended Working Group has accumulated, for more than a decade, a wealth of knowledge and information on gaps, challenges and solutions. Now is the time for action and concrete steps.

In closing, I would like to once again, thank our panellists and participants for sharing their insights, experiences and advice.

This meeting has demonstrated a strong consensus among the stakeholders on the need to further strengthen the protection of the human rights of older persons.

Thank you.

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