**Session 4: Towards strengthening the protection of human rights of older persons**

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I am honored to participate in such a forum on a topic that I consider extremely important and relevant. Indeed the International framework for protection of Human Rights of Older citizens is fragmented to a great extent and there is a need to introduce an International legal mechanism, which would serve as an Umbrella for all aspects of inclusion of Older people in the society and most importantly pave the way for improvement of their position in areas that are traditionally perceived as important. I am of course referring to community services, social security and health insurance, the ones you imagine when you say that sentence “The life is going on the local level”. Also we mustn’t forget other areas of life which are traditionally less associated with older population such as education, sports and other forms of active aging, whose improvement can bring added value to their quality of life and benefit the whole community.

But, we must ensure that the bottom up approach is not neglected when it comes to protection of rights. Engagement of the local communities as well as high awareness about the issue is as important as any International Convention. Together with the UN, we have already started specific activities at the local level. In a couple of towns we presented a report and research results on the political participation of older women, along with recommendations for advancement. We will continue with this activity in order to reach as many actors as possible. I am pleased to say that as a central level institution for combating discrimination, we have managed to motivate the Government to get involved. Furthermore, we insist on formation of national and local bodies dedicated to matters of aging and intergenerational solidarity, so the voice of older persons can be heard on all levels. But, none of these activities are going to be enough if we don’t increase engagement vertically as well as horizontally on all levels within the framework of a specialized UN Convention.

Thank you for your attention.