**USG Volker Türk’s statement for the OHCHR’s multi-stakeholder meeting on the human rights of older persons**

Protecting and promoting the human rights of older persons is critical to enable all members of society to live a life of dignity and well-being into old age. This topic is close to our heart as we think of aging parents and friends.

The 21st-century witnessed of rapid population ageing. An increasing number of persons are affected by age discrimination and ageism.

The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacted older persons. It created a sense of urgency to address human rights violations, including reduced, or lack of, access to opportunities and basic services, as well as discrimination, marginalization, violence and abuse they face.

This makes it imperative for society to respond to the challenge of building a society for all ages.

In this context, strengthening the human rights of older persons remains the most effective tool in closing the existing gaps in the international human rights system.

I am encouraged to see strong consensus regarding the need for explicit recognition of the human rights of older persons in the form of an international instrument that would place these rights at the forefront, and act as a catalyst of action.

Such an instrument would help create a space for older persons meaningfully to participate in the formulation and implementation of policies that impact them, building on the spirit and ideals of the Secretary-General’s Our Common Agenda, including intergenerational trust.

In the same vein, efforts are urgently needed to develop a data strategy to better understand the human rights situation of older persons and, in turn, adopt informed better policies.

In so doing, we need to address the particular challenges faced by specific groups since they are more likely to be left behind - older women, older persons affected by the digital divide, those belonging to minorities, coping with disabilities, those living in rural and conflict areas, and those facing displacement.

A society that promotes the active contribution of older persons will ensure the prosperity of society as a whole.

In line with the Secretary-General’s Call to Action for Human Rights, let me end by underscoring that the principle of intergenerational solidarity and mutual respect for the human rights of all generations holds the key to a better future for all.