

Thank you, Excellencies, Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Dr. Robin Fenley and I represent the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the International Association of Gerontologists and Geriatricians, both members of the Stakeholder Group on Ageing.

The Covid-19 crisis has served to open our eyes to the inequalities that underlie the crises of hunger, poverty, homelessness, and lack of routine healthcare. Witness: 80% of COVID-related deaths were older persons around the world. The senseless inequity of access to fundamental human rights demands targeted structural change as the gaping disparities between the haves and have nots can no longer be tolerated.

It is only through system change that the pervasive problems of inequality and inequity will begin to be addressed.

The global population of older persons is increasing significantly, yet 1 in 2 persons surveyed by the W.H.O. in 2021 acknowledged ageist viewpoints and behaviors, which result in the invisibility and marginalization of older persons, especially women.

How is it that in 2022, older women still are accused of witchcraft and forced to leave their home, or are excluded from policy discussions and decisions on sexual, reproductive, and health rights?

Elder abuse increased almost 84% over pre-pandemic estimates for women forced to remain with their abuser during COVID lockdowns. A full and meaningful life, free from violence, abuse, and neglect, is a human right across the lifespan.

While some older persons require specialized care, most are active and vital contributors to their families, communities and society. Yet many contributions of women and men over the age of 60 have not been fully recognized, but must be, and included in the 'building back better' from COVID, as we advance implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Noting the intersectionality of gender and age across SDGs, we call on all governments to expand their data collection efforts to ensure that no one, regardless of age, gender, or ability, is left behind.

We further urge immediate action to:

- invest in the human infrastructure, such as access to universal healthcare, with quality services for children, those with a disability, and older persons;
- to re-imagine improvements to the physical infrastructure that will facilitate daily life;
- to overhaul fiscal policies and global economic governance mechanisms;
- to pass age-inclusive policies; and
- to develop educational campaigns to end discrimination in all its forms.

The Stakeholder Group on Ageing stands ready to join in efforts in creating a world that is fair, inclusive and respectful of the human rights of every person, of all ages and abilities, leading to a just society throughout the globe. Thank you.