



BRAZIL

**Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing
Third Session – 21-24 August 2012**

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(Please check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to address the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing. Please allow me, on behalf of the Brazilian Delegation, to congratulate the Argentinian Chargé d'Affaires, Chairman of the Working Group, and the Argentinian Mission for their active role at the forefront of this important theme. We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all members of the Bureau and commend them for the organization of this meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

The rapid growth of the world population of older persons constitutes a significant demographic trend of our days. It is a well-known fact that many Member States are facing challenges stemming from the rising numbers of their elderly. At the regional level, UN data point out to a growing proportion on the ranks of ageing people in Latin America and the Caribbean. Their numbers are supposed to rise from around 8%, in 2000, to 16% in 2025, and 25% by mid-century. Brazil is all too aware of the demographic challenges to come. Currently, above 20 million persons are aged 60 and over in our country. They account for roughly 11% of the Brazilian population. This percentage of older persons in Brazil is expected to grow to an impressive figure of 28% in 2040, totalling almost 60 million people.

To meet these challenges Brazil has been enacting new legislation and implementing carefully designed public policies that recognize the importance of a crosscutting approach to better deal with older persons' needs. Our Federal Constitution of 1988 thus secured fundamental rights to older persons, by ensuring the right to pensions for millions of urban and rural workers and a minimum wage for every person over 65 who cannot provide for their own living. Our universal public health system also offers the distribution of free medication and medical assistance whenever necessary.

The Statute of Older Persons adopted in 2003 has served as a watershed to the rights of this segment of the Brazilian population. The National Council for Older Persons oversees within the Federal Government the implementation of the new framework. We have also adopted a bottom-up approach in order to better evaluate the progress made and meet the remaining challenges. It is important to note that this institutional framework highlights the condition of older people as subjects of rights rather than merely assisted citizens.

Mr. Chairman,

At the multilateral level, Brazil acknowledges the value and importance of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Political Declaration, adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in April 2002, as relevant steps towards "building a society for all ages", in spite of their non-binding nature.

Recent developments at the regional level have been particularly encouraging. In 2007, Brazil hosted the Second Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing, during which countries from Latin America and the Caribbean discussed the implementation of the 2002 Madrid Plan on Ageing, five years after its adoption. The Brasilia Declaration, the outcome document of the Conference, highlighted two important steps towards concrete advancement of the rights for older persons: the request for the designation of a Special Rapporteur to monitor and promote the rights of older persons; and consultations with a view to elaborating a UN Convention on the matter.

Remarkable progress has also been achieved within the Organization of American States, especially through the creation of a Working Group on Ageing. In addition, there has been strong mobilization on the matter within Mercosur to support an international convention on the rights of older persons.

However, despite all advances made, many challenges lay ahead of us. Older people are still victims of violence, including at home. Many cities are yet to be adapted to universally accessible patterns. Our health systems and social assistance networks also require further regulation in order to meet older people's special needs. Those are certainly not exclusive Brazilian concerns.

Mr. Chairman,

In the light of all this, the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing plays a significant role not only in evaluating the international framework of the rights of older persons but also in the promotion of discussions on how to address gaps and ensure progress. Brazil has enthusiastically participated in the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing since its First Session and firmly believes in a positive outcome for its process as a whole. Hopefully our work will contribute to overcome the challenges ahead so as to bring into equation the possible solutions bound to ensure a better world for older persons.

Thank you.