

Canada Intervention: Working Group on Ageing - First Session (April 2011)

Mr Chair,

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing.

At the outset, Canada wishes to acknowledge the important contribution of the United Nations system and regional bodies in support of efforts to improve the lives of seniors throughout the world.

This session of the Working Group, which focuses on the existing international framework of the human rights of older persons, is both necessary and timely. Canada is all too aware of the demographic challenges that lay ahead. Current population projections in Canada suggest that in the next 25 years the proportion of seniors will nearly double (from 13.9% in 2009 to 25% in 2036). During the same period our working age population is expected to decline from 70% to 60% which underlines the need for both active ageing and intergenerational solidarity.

Seniors play a significant role in strengthening our country. They contribute to the well-being of all Canadians through their community and economic participation. Canada is committed to ensuring seniors participation through measures which promote older-persons material and non-material well-being. Examples of measures adopted in Canada include:

- Measures to encourage retirement savings, and publicly managed pensions.
- In 2007, Canada established the National Seniors Council to advise the federal government on matters relating to senior's well-being and quality of life.
- Also, Canada's recent Federal Elder Abuse Initiative served to raise awareness about elder abuse among seniors, their families, caregivers, and the broader public.

Mr. Chair,

Moving forward, Canada supports measures to develop, mainstream, and exchange best practices within Seniors' policy and programs both domestically and internationally. We look forward to the upcoming review of the Madrid International Action Plan on Ageing, which will provide Member states an opportunity to take stock of our progress and identify where further gains can be made through policy, collaboration, and improving existing mechanisms.

I believe we are united in our goal to ensure that Seniors everywhere can exert their independence, continue to contribute to community life, participate in decisions affecting them, access quality care, and live a life of self-fulfillment and dignity.

Merci.