

STATEMENT

by

**Ms Anna Gralberg
Ministry of Health and Social Affairs**

at the

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

(Mr./Mrs. Chairman, colleagues, valued representatives from NGO:s, ladies and gentlemen)

Sweden fully associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the EU.

Thank you for this opportunity to address some important questions on how to strengthen the rights of older persons. We appreciate very much that the human rights situation for older persons is emerging on the global agenda.

Thanks to improved living conditions life expectancy is increasing globally, allowing for people to contribute to society also in high ages. However, this positive development can only be achieved and ensured through a raised awareness of the importance of a healthy ageing over the life-course, supportive environments and the right to end one's life with dignity, which calls for a better implementation of the human rights situation for older persons in all international framework.

First of all, we need to challenge the assumption of older people as passive recipients of welfare services and recognize their important role in society and the relevance of maintaining health and independence as long as possible. Empowering older persons and promoting their rights and opportunities is the key for increasing their participation in the society, both in the labor market and in society at large.

Secondly, while human rights apply to everyone without age limits, the realization of older person's human rights can in practice be jeopardize due to stereotype attitudes and discrimination towards older persons. The important work of identifying gaps in the implementation of existing frameworks addressing the actual challenges faced by older persons must therefore continue, bearing in mind that older persons are not a homogenous group.

We must remember that older persons in need of care and assistance are particularly vulnerable to human rights breaches. Because of their specific situation of social isolation, health problems, frailty or financial limitations they are more exposed to the risk of elder abuse.

In June this year the Swedish government launched a national strategy in order to support local quality development in this area. The purpose of the strategy is to raise awareness about the prevalence of violence against older persons, and to offer practical support in local planning and development. The strategy aims at inspiring local municipalities to implement quality improvements in terms of preventing, detect and manage violence against elderly which occur in health and social care.

An ageing population, combined with lower birth rates, changing family structures and migration, creates a number of challenges for frail older people in need of long-term care. Quality aspects may particularly be affected by a rapid growth in demand. These challenges have been discussed in a working group, chaired by Sweden, operating under the European Union's Social Protections Commission. The report "Adequate social protection against long-term care needs in an ageing society" underlines the importance of preventive measures, rehabilitation, welfare-technology, a better coordination of health and social care and the promotion of age-friendly environment.

This broad approach reflects the complexity of measures needed in order to safeguard and develop long-term care in an ageing population. At the same time evidence shows that more can be done to create better people-centred care. In this perspective a clear human rights perspective is of crucial importance.

Sweden would like to underline the importance of the work on the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. We welcome the further implementation of this action plan, especially concerning the identified areas in the report from the Secretary-General: income security, health care, how to counteract abuse and violence and age discrimination. We are also satisfied over the fact that civil society organizations working in the field of ageing is beginning to expand their reach at the national, regional and international level, according to the report.

In accordance with the conclusions and recommendations in the second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Actions on Ageing, we believe that the vision for the post-2015 development agenda can offer Member States and UN system possibilities to anchor the issue of ageing at the core of the global development agenda. Older persons can for example be a potential target group with respect to health and employment, as demonstrated in the European Commission's Communication "A decent Life for all: from vision to collective action".

Finally, we are welcoming that Ms. Rosita Kornfeld-Matte has been appointed as Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Older Persons. We appreciate an assessment of the implementation of existing international instruments with regard to older persons and note with satisfaction that this is included in the mandate. This is indeed a breakthrough which will increase the awareness on how universal human rights of older persons more systematically can be applied and implemented. We note with satisfaction that a gender and disability perspective is integrated in the mandate. We would also like to underline the importance of the independent expert's involvement in the post 2015-agenda.

I thank you, Mr / Mrs. Chair.

