

**Pakistan's Opening Statement during Open-ended Working
Group on Ageing 18-21 April 2011**

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

In the first place, we congratulate you and other distinguished colleagues on their election as the Chair and Bureau of this Working Group. We also appreciate your very inspiring opening statement on the subject.

Pakistan attaches importance to the rights of all persons living under its territory irrespective of their race, religion sex or age. Strong constitutional guarantees exist on the promotion and protection of rights of every individual. While there are no specific laws and legislations for older people in all fields, strong social, cultural and religious values and traditions have helped us promote and protect the rights of older persons in the society in different fields, thus ensuring their welfare, respect and dignity.

At the same time, there are a number of steps taken in various fields to ensure the rights of elderly in the health and employment sectors. Concrete steps are taken to establish old age benefit system and to give special preference in dealing with the older persons in public health institutions etc. Preference is also given to research and creation of institutions on specific diseases and problem of elderly people.

Pakistan also ensures that while honouring its commitments and obligations under various constitutional and international law provisions, there are no barriers that hinder progress on the basis of ageing. Accordingly, vulnerable groups in different categories due to their age and disability are given due attention.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan acknowledges the need to address the issue of Ageing on priority, as a significant percentage of world population

would be reaching that level by 2020. Though from one aspect it is a good sign showing the increase in life expectancy, it also calls for action on part of respective governments to ensure continued promotion and enjoyment of their basic rights all along their lives. However, we prefer taking an approach on the subject that is development oriented. We must proceed in a phased manner identifying concrete gaps and proposing specific recommendations to address these gaps comprehensively. It would ensure a progressive and cooperative approach that is fundamental to having a universal understanding and action on the subject.

We look forward to hearing the views of the distinguished panelists on some of the very interesting and important topics of this Working Group and assure you of our constructive engagement and support in carrying forward the work of this Working Group.

Thank you.