

**Statement by Dr. Melita GABRIČ,
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of the Republic of Slovenia,**

**at the Open – ended Working Group on Ageing
“Item 4: General discussion on Existing international framework on the human
rights of the older persons and identification of existing gaps at the international
level”**

New York, 30 July 2014

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, we would like to welcome the holding of the fifth meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing and thank the UN Secretariat and Bureau for its preparation. Slovenia supports the work of the Open-ended Working Group, also as a member of its bureau, and welcomes the appointment of an Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons. We issued an invitation to the Independent Expert, Ms. Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, and hope to be able to welcome her in Slovenia shortly.

Slovenia aligns itself with the EU statement.

Mr. Chairperson,

Aging has become a global phenomenon which today is manifested in all parts and regions of the world. Slovenia recognizes the need to pay more attention to the rights of older persons and to address holistically the social and economic challenges associated with the demographic trend. It joins others in supporting the efforts for strengthening the promotion and protection of all human rights by older persons.

As in many other countries, Slovenia's population is ageing rapidly – at this point more than 17 % of population is over 65 years old, while at the same time the share of younger population is decreasing. The goal of Slovenia in protecting and promoting the rights of older persons is to ensure that they live safely and independently, free from discrimination and abuse, and that they enjoy high quality of life with full-fledged social participation – as long as possible.

In developing its policies designed to reach this goal, Slovenia draws favorably upon different international human rights instruments, including the relevant human rights treaties, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, a range of EU documents as well as UN resolutions. We consider it vital that various mechanisms established in this area be further developed in a cohesive way. Slovenia also sees merit in exploring a new UN human rights instrument through a step-by-step constructive approach. We thus commend the work of the OEWG on Ageing in this regard, and welcome the fact that the mandate of the Independent Expert also focuses on the implementation of norms and standards related to the realization of all human rights by older persons.

Allow me also to mention that Slovenia as a candidate for *the Human Rights Council, for the period 2016-2018, wishes to further increase its focus on the rights of older persons, and on the need to ensure their active and effective participation in the fullest spectrum of social life.*

Mr. Chairperson,

To ensure the active participation of older persons in all walks of life and effectively promote their human rights, Slovenia adopted a strategy titled Solidarity, Good Intergenerational Relations and Quality Active Aging. The new strategy that is currently being devised will place further emphasis on the concept of quality aging with the broadest spectrum of active and healthy ageing as well as inter-generational solidarity.

Crucial in our efforts is a constructive cooperation between the governmental institutions, local communities and civil society. We developed a number of instruments in partnerships between different stakeholders from the governmental and non-governmental sectors. Often in collaboration, we created a number of good practices.

Allow me to mention a few recent examples. The project led by the Slovene Federation of Pensioners' Associations "Elderly for the Elderly" mobilizes 3600 volunteers who regularly visit people over 69 years of age, and offer them any assistance they may need. Since 2002 when the project started, 64% of the Slovenian population over 69 was included in the regular visitations. 80.000 people were offered assistance. This is a unique project that we would like to flag as an example of a particularly good practice.

As our renown expert and the President of the Slovene Federation of Pensioners' Associations, Dr. Mateja Kožuh-Novak, is also participating at this session, she will be able to further elaborate on this and other projects.

In the field of innovative and empowering strategies for care, we have been carrying out programs for fall prevention in old age, for the training of the family carers as well as for supporting the elderly in their home environment to access the information and services (the MATIjA network). Here we would like to emphasize that while providing good care for older persons is of utmost importance, we also need to focus on empowering them and reducing the numbers of older persons needing care.

We would also like to mention the project Symbiosis which focuses on intergenerational solidarity, where the younger generation is helping the older generation improve their computers literacy. The project has been nominated for the UN Population Award 2014.

Mr. Chairperson,

In conclusion, we believe that this session offers a chance that we learn from each, and thus we should all have a better idea of the measures and actions we can take to further improve the situation of older persons in our respective countries.

Thank you for your attention.