



General Assembly

Distr.: General
4 July 2019

Original: English

Human Rights Council

Forty-second session

9–27 September 2019

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Enjoyment of all human rights by older persons

Report of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons

Summary

In the present report, the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons reports on her activities, in particular on the third International Conference on the Human Rights of Older Persons, convened in Vienna on 12 and 13 November 2018. The declaration adopted at the end of the conference is annexed to the present report.

The Independent Expert also examines the human rights protection of older persons in emergency situations, an issue that she considers of key importance when addressing existing protection gaps. She provides a synopsis of the challenges that older persons face in the enjoyment of their human rights in emergency settings, and analyses the requirements for inclusive assistance and relief action to respond to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of older persons, while building on their roles and capacities. The Independent Expert concludes the report with her recommendations on how to facilitate the design and implementation of appropriate and effective frameworks to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons.



Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	3
II. Activities of the Independent Expert.....	3
III. Human rights of older persons in emergency situations.....	5
A. Background.....	5
B. Legal and policy framework	8
C. Human rights impact and challenges	10
IV. Conclusions and recommendations	14

I. Introduction

1. The Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, submits the present report to the Human Rights Council pursuant to its resolution 33/5. In the report, the Independent Expert examines the human rights protection of older persons in emergency situations, an issue that she considers of key importance when addressing existing protection gaps. The Independent Expert also reports on her activities during the reporting period, in particular within the context of the third International Conference on the Human Rights of Older Persons, convened by Austria in Vienna on 12 and 13 November 2018. The declaration adopted at the Conference is annexed to the present report.

II. Activities of the Independent Expert

2. During the reporting period, the Independent Expert visited Uruguay, from 19 to 29 November 2018 (see A/HRC/42/43/Add.1) and Mozambique, from 24 April to 2 May 2019 (see A/HRC/42/43/Add.2). She expresses her appreciation to the Governments of those countries for their cooperation before, during and after her visits, and for the fruitful and constructive dialogue.

3. On 11 September 2018, the Independent Expert, together with representatives of Argentina, Slovenia and the Group of Friends on the Human Rights of Older Persons (referred to informally as “GoF-HROP”), organized a panel discussion entitled “Social exclusion of older persons: impact and solutions”. She shared the findings of her previous thematic report (A/HRC/39/50) on the imperative need to adopt a human rights-based approach to ageing, which entails active measures against ageism and a re-conceptualizing of the way in which societies view older persons, from passive receivers of care and assistance to active contributors to society. She affirmed that social inclusion requires the mainstreaming of the rights of older persons into various fields, such as development, urban policies and poverty reduction strategies. Concluding, she stressed the significant negative practical implications due to the lack of a comprehensive and integrated international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons.

4. On 12 September 2018, the Independent Expert participated in a panel discussion on the theme “Older women and violence: challenges to access law enforcement and justice”, organized by the Women’s UN Report Network¹ and other civil society organizations. In her keynote speech, she stressed that violence against older women was prevalent globally, yet still invisible. She discussed the reasons for under detection and reporting, the lack of statistics and data, and potential countermeasures, and insisted that far more was required to advance on awareness and sensitization, and that the sharing of good practices and global guidance were the first step towards addressing prevention, data and study lacunae, as was the gathering of evidence to develop concrete solution-based approaches.

5. In her statement marking the twenty-ninth anniversary of the International Day of Older Persons, on 1 October 2019, the Independent Expert paid tribute to all human rights advocates working to combat ageism, discrimination and the denial of rights of older persons. On 27 September 2018, she participated in a side event held at the United Nations Headquarters on the human rights of older persons and positive ageing. The event was convened by Chile, Argentina and the Group of Friends of Older Persons, and was chaired by the President of Chile, Sebastian Piñera and the First Lady, Cecilia Morel. In her address, the Independent Expert emphasized the need for a holistic approach to protect and respect the human rights of older persons to address the challenges they faced on a daily basis.

6. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/144, on 2 October 2018 the Independent Expert addressed and engaged in an interactive dialogue with the Assembly under the agenda item on social development. Her presentation focused on the impact of the

¹ <https://wunrn.com/>.

social exclusion of older persons, an issue that she considers of crucial importance if existing protection gaps are to be addressed effectively. She shared her main findings and made recommendations on the issue aimed at assisting States in designing and implementing appropriate and effective frameworks to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons.

7. On 12 and 13 November 2018, Austria hosted, in Vienna, the third International Conference on the Human Rights of Older Persons (the previous conferences had been organized by Slovenia and the Independent Expert). The Independent Expert welcomed the initiative of the Government of Austria, and in particular, the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, and expressed her support and that of the Group of Friends of the Human Rights of Older Persons in Geneva (see A/HRC/36/48 para. 6).

8. The International Conference was preceded, on 11 November 2018, by a preparatory meeting entitled “Vienna NGOs and Civil Society Forum”, attended by representatives of civil society organizations, national human rights institutions and others, organized by the NGO Committees on Ageing in New York, Geneva and Vienna. The Independent Expert delivered a keynote speech and engaged in a preparatory discussion aimed at facilitating the various thematic discussions to be held at the conference. She recalled the findings of her report on autonomy and care (A/HRC/30/43), her comprehensive report on the status of human rights of older persons (A/HRC/33/44), and her report on robotics and rights, and the impact of automation on the human rights of older persons (A/HRC/36/48). In particular, she highlighted examples of substantive shortcomings in current human rights protection and areas where guidance was required to ensure, for instance, equality in old age, and how emerging robotics and assistive technology had an impact on care services. She also discussed elements of how the contribution made by civil society could ensure a human rights-based approach, such as how to establish a global platform for dialogue and the sharing of good practices, and how to improve the mainstreaming of the rights of older persons.

9. Austria invited the Independent Expert on an official country visit soon after her appointment. She conducted her visit from 22 to 30 January 2015 (see A/HRC/30/43/Add.2). The conference was a topic of discussion in the context of her visit, and was also a follow-up activity to contribute to the implementation of the recommendations made by the Independent Expert in her comprehensive report (A/HRC/33/44). By organizing the Vienna Conference, the Government of Austria made an active contribution to the ongoing strengthening of efforts for the international protection of the human rights of older persons, and engaged concretely by facilitating the adoption in Vienna of the declaration on the human rights of older persons, annexed to the present report (see also A/HRC/33/44, para. 13 and A/HRC/39/50, para. 3). In accordance with the organizer’s declared intent, the outcome of the conference also informed the discussion on normative inputs for a dedicated instrument on the rights of older persons.

10. The Independent Expert also participated in the ninth and tenth sessions of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing in New York, in July 2018 and April 2019 respectively. She contributed to the focus area discussions on autonomy and independence, long-term and palliative care, education, training, lifelong learning and capacity-building, as well as social protection and social security (including social protection floors). She welcomes the fact that the Working Group has begun to focus its discussions on normative inputs in specific areas where the enjoyment of human rights by older persons might be affected and require further protection, and that delegations expressed their support to continue this practice. The Independent Expert was pleased to contribute, including by drawing on the findings of her thematic reports, to the discussion on the issues of equality and non-discrimination, violence, neglect and abuse, autonomy and independence, and long-term and palliative care.

11. In her statement to the press on the occasion of the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on 15 June, the Independent Expert focused on the sexual abuse and the rape of older persons, which remains a taboo and largely unreported and undetected, and thus mostly invisible. The mandate also organized, on 13 June, a session at RightsCon 2019, held in Tunis, on “Granny and the robots: sex, violence and care. Why human rights matter”. Also

the Independent Expert gave a keynote speech on 7 June 2019 at the conference on ageing and technology in an inclusive society, organized by the Lisbon University Institute, in which she highlighted the necessities for a human rights-based approach.

III. Human rights of older persons in emergency situations

A. Background

12. In the present report, the Independent Expert builds on her activities in accordance with her mandate, paying special attention to the different groups of older persons, such as refugees and climate-displaced persons, and persons facing conflict, emergency or disaster situations. She notably draws on the discussions held at the side event on “Building climate resilience: the rights of groups in focus” and during the expert round-table discussion on “Climate displacement and human rights” at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva in June 2015 (see A/HRC/30/43), in which the Independent Expert participated. The report is also informed by the discussions held in April 2016 on the need to build older persons’ resilience in disaster situations at the Climate Displacement Roundtable organized in Geneva by Displacement Solutions and the Global Migration Centre of the Graduate Institute Geneva (A/HRC/33/44, para. 14).

13. The Independent Expert also paid particular attention to the issue of older persons in post-disaster situations or affected by climatic changes during her country visits, including to Mauritius (A/HRC/30/43/Add.3), Namibia (A/HRC/36/48/Add.2), Costa Rica (A/HRC/33/44/Add.1), Singapore (A/HRC/36/48/Add.1), Georgia (A/HRC/39/50/Add.1) and Mozambique (A/HRC/42/43/Add.2), which allowed her to gather first-hand information.

14. On 13 September 2019, the Independent Expert held bilateral consultations at the Headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva to discuss various protection issues pertaining to older persons in emergency situations. She commends ICRC, in particular the advisers on detention, inclusion and diversity, for convening the consultations, in which the challenges of humanitarian action and response activities for older persons, and opportunities and roles, were discussed, and which also informed the present report. The Independent Expert also expresses her gratitude to the International Labour Organization for the consultations held in April 2019 and its contribution.

15. On 28 February 2019, the Independent Expert convened an interagency and stakeholder meeting at the Palais des Nations, United Nations Office at Geneva, on how humanitarian organizations could enhance the inclusion of older persons in responses to humanitarian emergencies. At the meeting, participants also considered the roles and specific vulnerabilities of older persons in humanitarian crises, as well as the obstacles and opportunities for inclusive humanitarian assistance. The Independent Expert thanks all stakeholders for their valuable contributions and insight.

16. On 5 April 2019, in Geneva, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) organized bilateral consultations with some 20 representatives from various fields of competences, areas of responsibilities and several field offices via videoconference to discuss the situation of older persons in forced displacement. The primary aim was to identify the key issues that older persons face in forced displacement, and to make recommendations to assist in the preparation of a written UNHCR submission to inform the present report. The Independent Expert expresses her gratitude to UNHCR, and commends it for that initiative, and for its cooperation and support for the cause of protecting the rights of older persons. She further notes with appreciation that UNHCR has substantially increased its emphasis on priority areas of engagement with regard to protecting the rights of older persons in forced displacement, and has established a dedicated focal point on ageing within its Division of International Protection. The Independent Expert looks forward to continuing this constructive and fruitful cooperation.

17. The Independent Expert also contributed to the expert group meeting organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at Headquarters from 15 to 17 May 2019 on the theme “Older persons in emergency crises”. The aim of the meeting was to gather input allowing the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to better support Member States in the context of any policy processes, namely the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the meeting, the Independent Expert, in her contribution emphasized the human rights imperative, which is always applicable, but a fortiori for older persons in humanitarian emergencies.

18. Emergency situations, whether caused by conflict or natural disaster, invariably result in or exacerbate human rights concerns, including those of older persons, who are entitled to equal protection under international human rights and humanitarian law.

19. In 2017, a survey tallied 335 natural disasters that affected more than 95.6 million people globally, killing 9,697 and causing damage estimated at \$335 billion. Asia was most affected through floods and storms, with 44 per cent of all disaster events, 58 per cent of total deaths and 70 per cent of the total people affected. The Americas reported the greatest economic losses, accounting for 88 per cent of the total cost from 93 disasters.²

20. The number of weather-related disasters has increased over the past decade: between 2007 and 2018, they accounted for no less than 53.7 per cent of all crises, a third of which were floods.³

21. As at June 2018, 68.5 million people had been forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict or generalized violence. These numbers include 20.2 million refugees (for the first exceeding 20 million), 3.2 million asylum seekers and 39.7 million internally displaced persons. Some 5.2 million people were newly displaced in the first half of 2018.

22. According to available data, 3 per cent of refugees were over 60 years of age in 2017. Besides the general difficulties with data collection, data are incomplete owing to the intrinsic issue of the relativity of age; refugees and other displaced populations may in fact be considered to be “older” at a much younger age and therefore make up a larger portion of the displaced population. It is important to bear in mind that notions of age may vary according to circumstances, conditions, cultures and other considerations and factors, which are themselves subject to change. In this regard, the Independent Expert recalls that the mandate conceives ageing as a social contextual construct, involving far more life-course factors and conditions than just chronological or numerical age, such as biological and socioeconomic determinants, which are also subject to change.

23. In 2018, 84 per cent of displaced persons were hosted in developing regions, where service systems, including services required by older persons, are already under pressure and the capacity to scale them up to cope is limited. At mid-2018, the top 10 refugee-hosting countries – including four of the world’s least-developed countries – hosted a total of some 12.6 million refugees. Forcibly displaced older persons often face additional obstacles when attempting to integrate into their host communities, given that they have fewer opportunities to participate in or build social networks, such as through education or work.

24. The vulnerabilities of older persons in emergency contexts may be intrinsic (poor health, disability or frailty), extrinsic (due to low income, low degree of literacy or the remoteness of the place of residence) or due to systemic factors (lack of disaggregated data, or failure to assess needs correctly or to monitor the effectiveness of assistance provided).

25. Vulnerabilities must be analysed while bearing in mind the particularly heterogeneous nature of the population group formed by older persons, as age often compounds other forms of vulnerability or inequality – such as gender, race, education

² See www.emdat.be/natural-disasters-2017.

³ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *World Disasters Report 2018*, available from <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/10/B-WDR-2018-EN-LR.pdf>.

level, income, health status, or access to justice – that accumulate during a lifetime. When older persons do not enjoy their rights fully in regular times, their vulnerability to situations of emergency is likely to increase.

26. Physical challenges that come with ageing but that normally do not necessarily decrease the quality of life or significantly decrease the capacity for daily functioning of an older person may become serious impediments in an emergency. Minor events, such as losing a pair of eyeglasses or a walking cane, may in an emergency setting have a significant impact on older persons, because they limit their mobility and their capacity to adapt to changing conditions, such as during an evacuation.

27. Likewise, sensory deficits, such as impaired vision or hearing, or cognitive/neurological conditions may make it more difficult for certain older persons to understand emergency warnings and directions.⁴ Mental conditions may also cause older persons to experience hardships during emergencies, including in shelters where crowding, lack of privacy or noise levels may negatively affect their autonomy and independence.⁵

28. The safety of older persons in emergency situations depends on factors other than just health services; economic or social marginalization, the need for protection from abuse and exploitation, social welfare and intergenerational support are all factors that have an impact on the well-being of older persons and their ability to enjoy their human rights fully, including in emergencies.⁶

29. The vulnerability of older persons may also be social. Social connectedness in an emergency situation helps to protect the health and well-being of an older person by providing emotional and practical, informational and appraisal support, the latter referring information that helps older persons to appraise the situation.⁷ On the other hand, older persons may be at a higher risk of having reduced social support and connectedness because of factors such as age, illness or death of friends.

30. Social inequality and lower socioeconomic status of older persons may be the result of lower income security, which may directly influence material or practical resources at their disposal in an emergency situation, such as means of transport, communication technology or accommodation outside the area affected by the emergency. Social inequality may also be related to geographic location. Living in a flood-prone area, for instance, is likely to increase the vulnerability of older persons.⁸

31. Older persons often remain in their places of origin even when their family and community evacuate either because they retain a strong sense of attachment to the property or because they have been left behind by their relatives to look after the property. As a result, they may be more exposed to hazards and risks, and have more difficult access to relief goods and services that are provided in safer zones.

32. As families are separated and community structures break down during displacement, older persons may become isolated or be required to take on new roles as heads of household, to care children or other dependent family members. Mobility difficulties, poor health, disability or caregiving responsibilities for family members pose challenges to many older persons in gaining access to humanitarian assistance, such as food and core relief item distributions, water or fuel. Older persons also face a greater risk of

⁴ David Hutton, *Older people in emergencies: considerations for action and policy development*, World Health Organization (WHO), 2008.

⁵ Bruce H. Young, Julian D. Ford and Josef I. Ruzek, *Disaster Mental Health Services: A Guidebook for Clinicians and Administrators* (Washington, D.C., United States. Department of Veterans Affairs, 1998); William Oriol, *Psychosocial Issues for Older Adults in Disasters* (Washington, D.C., United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, 1999).

⁶ Hutton, *Older people in emergencies*.

⁷ Wolfgang Stroebe, *Social Psychology and Health* (Buckingham, Open University Press, 2000).

⁸ Susan L. Cutter, Brian J. Boruff and W. Lynn Shirley, "Social vulnerability to environmental hazards", *Social Science Quarterly*, (2003). 84, 242–261 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1540-6237.8402002>.

human rights abuses, including violence, exploitation and abuse; as well as restrictions on the right to work and the right to health.

33. The displacement of older persons may often become protracted displacement because of their lack of physical strength to return or rebuild the shelter or other facilities necessary for their livelihood, or because, even if they do return, they will be excluded from cash assistance, microcredits or other recovery schemes because of their age.

34. Moreover, the specific needs and human rights concerns of internally displaced persons, including those of older internally displaced persons, do not automatically disappear when a conflict or natural disaster ends; instead, the displaced – whether they return to their homes, settle elsewhere in the country or attempt to integrate locally – usually face continuing challenges requiring support until a durable solution has been found for their displacement.⁹

35. On the other hand, the generalization of older persons as a vulnerable group in need of protection from the impact of disasters fails to recognize their important contribution to disaster risk reduction, post-disaster management and climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies that older persons are already making.¹⁰ Even though older persons play an important role in displaced communities, including in preserving cultural heritage, social cohesion and connection with countries of origin, the response to forced displacement often focuses on vulnerability and does not recognize that role or the capacities of older persons, or allow for their participation in decision-making.

36. Despite the heightened risks that they face, older persons are often less visible in assessment and planning processes also owing to a focus in humanitarian action on younger age groups and a lack of disaggregation of data of higher age brackets. These challenges to the inclusion of older persons in humanitarian action may be exacerbated by limited explicit requirements specified by donors for reporting on how projects and programmes benefit the older age group.

B. Legal and policy framework

37. In the absence of a dedicated instrument on older persons and although not applicable to all older persons, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities offers some guidance. Article 11 of the Convention establishes that persons with disabilities have an equal right to humanitarian relief following a natural disaster or conflict. States parties are required to take “all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters”. Article 25, which addresses the issue of health, specifically refers to older persons, recalling that States parties are required to provide health services for persons with disabilities specifically because of their disabilities, including early identification and intervention as appropriate, and “services designed to minimize and prevent further disabilities, including among children and older persons”.

38. In its general comment No. 27 (2010) on older women and the protection of their human rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recognized that climate change has a different impact on women, especially older women who, owing to their physiological differences, physical ability, age and gender, as well as social norms and roles and an inequitable distribution of aid and resources relating to social hierarchies, are particularly disadvantaged in the face of natural disasters. The Committee also noted that their limited access to resources and decision-making processes increased their vulnerability to climate change.

⁹ See IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons, The Brookings Institution – University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement, April 2010.

¹⁰ See International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *A practical guide to Gender-sensitive Approaches for Disaster Management*, Geneva, 2010.

39. Several regional instruments are particularly relevant to the situation of older persons in emergencies. Article 14 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa provides for the protection of older persons in conflict and disaster situations. Accordingly, States have an obligation to ensure that, in situations of risk, including natural calamities, conflict situations, during civil strife or wars, older persons are among those to enjoy access, on a priority basis, to assistance during rescue efforts, settlement, repatriation and other interventions. States also need to ensure that older persons receive humane treatment, protection and respect at all times and are not left without needed medical assistance and care.

40. Similarly in its article 29, the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons specifically addresses situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies, stipulating that States are to take all necessary specific measures to ensure the safety and rights of older persons in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies, and disasters, in accordance with the norms of international law, particularly international human rights law and international humanitarian law. This includes assistance measures specific to the needs of older persons in preparedness, prevention, reconstruction and recovery activities associated with emergencies, disasters and conflict situations. The Convention also aims at fostering the participation of older persons in civil protection protocols in the event of natural disasters.

41. UNHCR has a specific policy on the protection of older persons, which emphasizes the active role that older persons have in their communities and recognizes a number of challenges they face in displacement (such as a loss of assets, the breakdown of social support systems, and being left behind when communities flee) and when they return to their countries of origin.¹¹ The UNHCR age, gender and diversity policy recognizes the heightened protection risks that older persons may face, as well as the vital roles they can play in their households and communities.¹²

42. The global compact on refugees¹³ includes a total of eight references to older persons and a further eight references to age. It calls for a strong partnership and participatory approach in the response to refugee movements, including participation by older persons. It also identifies older persons as having specific needs to be addressed in the refugee response, while calling upon States and other stakeholders to promote economic development and access to work, including for older persons. Older persons are highlighted as a group that can benefit from the expansion and enhancement of national health-care systems to facilitate access by refugees and host communities, and are specifically mentioned as a group that should have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. In relation to return, it emphasizes the need for support to livelihoods, development and economic issues, as well as measures to address the housing, land and property issues that older persons face.

43. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement¹⁴ identify rights and guarantees relevant to the protection of persons from forced displacement and their protection and assistance during displacement, as well as during return or resettlement and reintegration. Under paragraph 2, the Principles address the situation of vulnerable groups of internally displaced persons, including older persons, and emphasize that they are entitled to specific protection and assistance and to treatment that takes into account their special needs.¹⁵ This is also mentioned in article 9 (2) (c) of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.

¹¹ www.unhcr.org/en-au/excom/standcom/4e857c279/unhcrs-policy-older-refugees-19-april-2000-annex-ii-draft-report-seventeenth.html.

¹² www.unhcr.org/5aa13c0c7.pdf.

¹³ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-third Session, Supplement No. 12 (A/73/12) (Part II)*.

¹⁴ www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2018/downloads/2018-GRID.pdf.

¹⁵ Walter Kälin, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement: Annotations*, Studies in Transnational Legal Policy (American Society of International Law and Brookings Institution), 2008.

C. Human rights impact and challenges

1. Context gap

44. Discrimination against older persons in emergency setting may be manifested at the individual level, whereby responders and relief workers act under prejudicial assumptions regarding age and older persons, in which case the latter receive inadequate, unequal or otherwise inadequate services and treatment. It may also be structural, including relating to data collection, but also planning and operational management and reporting, in which case older persons remain virtually invisible to policymakers and to the agencies implementing emergency planning and response operations.

45. When data are collected, older persons are often frequently either overlooked or treated as if all persons over the age of 60 belonged to a homogenous population, even though the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the old and the older-old (those 80 years of age and over) are considerably different.

46. Lack of data disaggregated by age can have a significant impact on planning and operational response to emergency situations. If older persons are invisible during the planning phase and preparedness assessments (that is, if data are not disaggregated by age and older persons are not involved in the planning process itself), the likelihood that the needs, capacities and contributions of older persons will be overlooked in the response and recovery phase sharply increases.

47. Serious challenges in collecting data on older persons include the determination of age and the setting of a cut-off age for persons to be considered old, regardless of sociocultural factors and the general context. Household surveys, which are used frequently in assessments, can be biased given that data are collected by communicating with one person in the household, and may therefore not reflect the needs of older persons. Similarly, expenditure surveys do not indicate the allocation of funds, nor the control of resources within a household.

48. Reasons for not collecting disaggregated data may include cost factors but also a lack of knowledge of how to carry out larger, contextual generation analyses, and the lack of knowledge of the pre-crisis context. Even in cases of emergencies where disaggregated data are collected, most operatives in the field do not necessarily know how to use the data to improve programming.¹⁶ Without data disaggregated by age, however, an emergency response cannot respond to the human rights concerns of older persons.

2. Right to housing

49. Housing, land and property rights are a key concern in emergency situations, including for older persons. Limited mobility and the wish of older persons to be close to their familiar surroundings despite the increased risks are elements that have to be taken into consideration when discussing adequate housing solutions.

50. Criteria for adequacy of housing encompass accessibility, affordability, habitability, security of tenure, cultural adequacy, suitability of location, and access to essential services, such as health care. Safety standards aimed at reducing damage in the event of future disasters is also a criterion for adequacy.

51. Shelter accommodation conditions often are not fit for older persons, who may need to be closer to certain facilities, such as toilets, or be closer to their families at all times. Older persons with disabilities disproportionately experience poor housing conditions, which increase the risk related to emergencies and disasters and must be accounted for in the planning process.¹⁷

52. Housing and property that older persons are forced to leave behind in emergency situations can be at risk of looting, arbitrary or illegal occupation or further destruction. On

¹⁶ Dyan Mazurana, Prisca Benelli, Human Gupta and Peter Walker, *Sex and Age Matter: Improving Humanitarian Response in Emergencies*, (Feinstein International Center, Tufts University, 2011).

¹⁷ <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/world-disaster-report-2018/>.

return, many older persons have limited access to secure housing because, for example, their house has been destroyed or taken over by others, such as younger family members.

53. Older refugees and internally displaced persons living outside camps often encounter difficulties in their access to housing on the local market because of high costs and their own limited purchasing power (such as older persons who have become heads of the household in displacement).

54. Whether rooted in customs or in statutory law, discriminatory practices often prevent older widows from owning or inheriting property, which is a violation of their right to property. The considerable risk of poverty associated with the loss of livelihood can be exacerbated in emergency situations.¹⁸

3. Right to social security

55. In its general comment No. 19 (2007) on the right to social security, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights emphasized the obligations of States to ensure the right to social security when individuals or a group are unable, on grounds reasonably considered to be beyond their control, to realize that right themselves, within the existing social security system with the means at their disposal. It also explicitly referred to the need to provide special attention to ensuring that the social security system can respond in times of emergency, for example during and after natural disasters, armed conflict and crop failure.

56. In situations of forced displacement, older persons often face numerous obstacles in their access to social protection systems, including their pensions. In particular, older refugees often do not have access to national systems because of their refugee status.

57. One key impediment to access to pensions for older displaced persons, including refugees, is lack of documentation. Identity documents may be left behind or lost during flight. In addition, restrictions on freedom of movement may constitute a significant obstacle, especially in situations of encampment policies, besieged areas and lack of security, and in particular for internally displaced persons, who often are not registered. For refugees, mobility difficulties can hinder access to registration in situations where mobile registration or other accessibility options are not available.

58. Difficulties in access to a pension limit the independence and autonomy, and thus increase protection risks, of older persons. Lack of access to social protection systems may result in or further aggravate old age poverty and may also have a negative impact on their coping mechanisms, leading to, for example, reduced food intake.

4. Right to work

59. In emergency situations, including forced displacement, older persons are often excluded from opportunities to work due to discrimination based on both age and status as a refugee or internally displaced person. Moreover, in many countries, refugees do not have the right to work. Another factor is the location of camps and settlements for refugees and internally displaced persons far from economic centres.

60. Older persons are routinely excluded from economic recovery initiatives. Livelihood programmes often have a cut-off age or do not recognize the skills and capacities of older persons who wish to work. Age restrictions may also exclude older persons from participating in job rehabilitation programmes, income-generating activities or food-for-work programmes and from obtaining microcredit. Older persons may also face competition from young people; and if they have been out of the labour market for longer periods, including due to displacement, their skills may be no longer relevant.

61. There are also cases where older persons in an emergency situation may be pushed to work in the informal economy, where they often face exploitation, poor working conditions or other abuses.

¹⁸ See Briefing paper for the first working session of the Open Ended Working Group on Ageing, 18–21 April 2011, available from <https://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/firstsession.shtml>.

5. Rights to food and to health

62. Older persons face numerous challenges to the enjoyment of their right to health during emergency situations. Existing health conditions, chronic illnesses and disability are a frequent risk for older persons, and even those who are autonomous in daily life may be at significant risk in emergency situations due to lack of access to medical care, the unavailability of relevant medical records necessary for establishing appropriate treatment of an older person during an emergency situation or during evacuation, or as a result of the suspension of therapy or treatment, or even a disruption to daily routines relating to health care and nourishment.

63. The dietary needs of not only older persons are often overlooked; because if they care for orphaned children, that additional food support is not necessarily taken into account. Older persons with mobility issues may moreover be prevented from collecting food.¹⁹ Likewise, older persons with health conditions or disabilities may have difficulty reaching health-care facilities centres, especially when displaced populations are dispersed in remote locations.

64. Health programming in emergency situations may overlook the needs of older persons. Vaccination and nutrition programmes often prioritize children, while older persons continue to face significant risks. They also have special needs, such as access to adequate food that satisfies their health and nutritional requirements, and may need access to medical personnel trained in geriatric issues. The care most often needed by older persons, such as to prevent and treat non-communicable diseases, and access to assistive devices may also not be prioritized during an emergency.

65. Mental health in emergencies is a significant concern. Conditions may be brought on by the emergency, by pre-existing conditions and/or by the humanitarian response, such as an overcrowded shelter or the lack of privacy. Assessment tools are virtually never designed to recognize depression or the early stages of dementia in older persons, even when they are designed to identify the psychosocial needs of older persons. Ensuring free and informed consent to treatment is another challenge that may be compounded during an emergency situation, when additional strain is placed on the administration of health-care services.

66. The loss of and breakdown in social networks associated with forced displacement may create a situation whereby the significant mental health and psychosocial support needs of many older persons are no longer met. Funding for mental health and psychosocial support is often limited, and where such services are in place, younger age groups are usually prioritized.

6. Violence, maltreatment and abuse

67. The most frequent forms of elder abuse during or in the aftermath of a crisis are financial abuse, abandonment and systemic abuse, as well as physical abuse. Financial abuse often takes the form of contractor fraud in the recovery phase and theft in shelter. Older persons with diminished cognitive functions and physical strength and those alone in the shelter context, that is, without an accompanying member of the family, are exposed to a greater risk of theft.

68. Older persons in situations of forced displacement, particularly older women, are at heightened risk of violence, exploitation and abuse. Violence may be encountered inside or outside the home (such as when collecting firewood).

69. Systemic abuse refers to disregarding older persons and their specific needs during a response to an emergency, distribution of relief aid or provision of services. Older persons are often less visible to humanitarian actors delivering programmes for prevention, mitigation and response to violence, exploitation and abuse. It would be incorrect to assume that older women are not subject to sexual and gender-based violence, or that older persons

¹⁹ Hutton, *Older people in emergencies*, p. 8.

are cared for by families. Barriers to reporting include limited mobility, isolation, fear of retaliation and communication difficulties due to language, hearing or visual impairments.

70. Other risks, such as neglect and/or abandonment by the family, often in hospitals and nursing homes, exploitation by family members, emotional abuse and lack of control over assets and decision-making are often exacerbated in emergency situations, as older persons are separated from community support and familiar service structures, while and their role in the family and the community may be undermined.

7. Digital technology impact

71. Visual and hearing impairments may limit not only the capacity of older persons to obtain crucial information but also their mobility; consequently, they may be deprived of access to relief support and other services. As a result, older persons are much less visible in the community, which leads to the collection of data that are skewed, affecting not only the operational effectiveness of relief efforts but also future planning.

72. Digital information and communications technology is increasingly an essential element of emergency management and has the potential to improve the effectiveness of protection and relief activities. Technology is increasingly being used to support delivery of humanitarian assistance, including through the provision of information and feedback/complaints mechanisms.

73. Examples of the role of such technology include the use of social media to help to prepare citizens for natural disasters, customizing information on shelters and other forms of assistance made accessible by mobile telephones, or Twitter hashtags to map messages sent by the population and thereby make early damage assessments. Digital data-collection tools may be used to monitor the distribution of relief aid by local, smaller actors in areas to which international humanitarian agencies have no access.²⁰

74. The increased use of technology, low digital literacy rates, unequal power relations within households that may deny older persons' access to mobile telephones, hearing and visual impairments, and cognitive impairments, such as dementia, may also effectively exclude older persons from information on relief and support services, or the services themselves. Language barriers may have a similar effect, given that older persons are more likely to speak local languages not used by humanitarian actors.

75. A combination of modern technology, such as satellite data and computer processing of digital information, with traditional observation, including the knowledge of older persons, may increase the predictive quality and effectiveness of early warning systems. Remote sensing and satellite imagery analysis can serve as complementary tools for rapid primary data collection, damage assessments and the mapping of the impact of disasters and crises: information that will inform aid response and decision-making.

76. Biometric identification technology is increasingly used as a tool for emergency support and refugee management. Reliance on readily available, mass-market digital technology in the humanitarian context is accompanied, however, by specific risks and limitations, particularly considering that such "off-the-shelf" solutions were not designed for humanitarian actors and may not follow a human rights-based approach.

77. In particular, concerns subsist with regard to information that is collected through a process subject to little control and that rely on a mixture of data provided voluntarily and systemic metadata. The risk of overlooking digitally invisible older persons poses an important challenge. Also, the adoption rate among older persons of "smart" digital technology and the digital social network is significantly lower than the average in the population. Any decision-making based on such data is likely to overlook the more vulnerable members of the age group who have no access to or knowledge of digital technology or social networks due to numerous reasons.

²⁰ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *World Disasters Report 2013: Focus on technology and the future of humanitarian action*, available from www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/134658/WDR%202013%20complete.pdf.

78. Other major concerns are due to the policy and doctrine gaps relating to data privacy, data-sharing and other areas that may risk exposing beneficiaries to human rights violations. Digital footprints can be used to track and target older persons, just as they can be used to find a lead on a missing person.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

79. The Independent Expert notes that older persons are disproportionately affected in emergency situations. Special attention should therefore be paid to the heterogeneous nature of the older population, and the many factors that contribute to the specific and heightened vulnerability of its members.

80. At the same time, the Independent Expert stresses the imperative to recognize the important roles, abilities and resources of older persons – both men and women – in forced displacement, and to work with communities to strengthen these roles, such as by engaging older persons in conflict resolution activities and in decisions affecting their lives. Attention should be paid to avoid inadvertently undermining the roles of older persons, such as by duplicating existing community leadership structures.

81. The Independent Expert emphasizes the need to take into account in planning, response and recovery phases of emergency management the fact that older persons are often the last to leave their places of origin, and when they are displaced, they risk remaining in a situation of protracted displacement. Appropriate resources should be allocated, and the rights of older persons in such situations should be recognized and upheld.

82. The Independent Expert notes that any assessment made should take into consideration the inequalities accumulated during an older person's life, due to factors such as race, gender, education level, income, health status, disability or access to justice, when analysing the extent to which different subgroups of older persons are vulnerable and what kind of response – items as much as services – will be adequate for them.

83. There is a need for a systematic approach to data collection and analysis at all levels, outside of the emergency response system that will, hand-in-hand with a human rights-based approach to inclusion of older people, create a body of disaggregated data that can be used for contextual analysis. This is a first step to ensure that, in emergency planning and response, there is reliable evidence to inform the plans and monitor their operational effectiveness, coupled with continuous collection of data during all phases of response and recovery.

84. The Independent Expert emphasizes the need to close the gap between the policy and implementation levels. While policies may be inclusive of older persons in all stages of emergency planning and response, the specific needs, challenges and barriers that older persons face in exercising their rights are not recognized in practice. The mandate holder therefore stresses the need to meaningfully include older persons at all stages of the emergency management cycle (including planning and budgeting, as well as monitoring and evaluation) while ensuring that the emergency response is approached from a human rights-based perspective that is clear and uncompromised at all levels.

85. The Independent Expert calls upon all concerned to pay special attention to the collection of information on older persons at the beginning of all emergency response operations. The needs assessment phase is crucial, as it determines the subsequent course of action. Failing to identify the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of older persons at this stage will lead to an inadequate response that will not meet the needs or utilize the capacities of older persons. At the same time, the Independent Expert stresses the importance of the pre-emergency collection of data on older persons and of verifying the data collected during an emergency with the existing data of national statistic institutes, to ensure that they accurately reflect the proportion of older persons in the general population, while noting that, in many emergency settings,

older persons may be more affected than the average population as a result of their specific vulnerability patterns.

86. Data used in assessments should not only be disaggregated by age but also ensure that age cohorts reflect the heterogeneous nature of the older population to allow for a differentiation of older and very old persons, who have different needs and capacities. Age cohorts should also be granular enough to allow taking into account the relativity of the notions of age, depending on the context. The Independent Expert recalls that age is a social construct, and that persons who have endured conditions of war, conflict and natural disasters cannot be regarded with the healthy ageing metrics of affluent societies.

87. The Independent Expert moreover notes that household surveys commonly used in needs assessments do not allow accurate identification of the needs of older persons. Such surveys tend to perpetuate the invisibility of older persons in subsequent programming and lead to inadequate assistance. She notes that, with the increasing use of technology in humanitarian action, including during the assessment phase, there is a risk of overlooking the digitally invisible older persons.

88. The Independent Expert highlights the crucial importance of consulting with older persons to identify and address barriers to access to assistance, such as reliance on technologies, restrictions on mobility and administrative hurdles. In this context, she stresses the need to reach out to older persons, including through mobile registration and other accessible mechanisms, and particularly to those with limited mobility to ensure the inclusion of all older persons in need. She also emphasizes the need to take measures to ensure access to documentation, including identity documents, for displaced older persons.

89. The Independent Expert emphasizes the need to increase funding to address the needs of older persons in emergency situations, such as forced displacement. It is imperative to address the current under prioritization of older persons by highlighting the importance of their inclusion in funding applications.

90. Moreover, the Independent Expert stresses the need to ensure that staff working in emergency situations, such as protection and inclusion officers, are allocated the meaningful budgetary means to be able to implement inclusion policies, wherever they exist, in practice. Robust training is essential for staff to be able to understand and identify the inclusion issues that different groups face, thereby ensuring that older persons are not left behind.

91. It is furthermore essential to ensure that humanitarian actors are required to report on how humanitarian programmes are reaching and responding to the needs of older persons, including through age-disaggregated data.

92. The Independent Expert emphasizes the need to conduct research on the impact of the use of technology in humanitarian action on older persons, and into effective measures to ensure that older persons are not left behind. She reiterates her concern at data collection subject to little control and that relies on a mixture of data provided voluntarily and systemic metadata (such as household surveys), which tends to overlook the needs of older persons. She also reiterates the privacy concerns raised in her thematic report on robotics and rights and the impact of automation on the human rights of older persons (A/HRC/36/48).

93. The Independent Expert also highlights the need to provide access to national systems, including social protection, for refugees and internally displaced persons, including through legislative change. She stresses the importance of universal non-contributory old-age pensions prior to emergency situations to foster the resilience of older persons.

94. The Independent Expert notes that there is insufficient research into and awareness of the prevalence and risk of elder abuse in emergency settings. She also notes that the general tendency of underreporting cases of abuse, maltreatment and violence against older persons is amplified during emergency situations, owing to a multitude of factors. Preventing elder abuse in emergency settings requires a

reduction in the risk of violence, exploitation and abuse of older persons. It requires the development of tools able to recognize and identify risk factors in the population of older persons affected by a crisis, ensuring that contact and communications between older persons and their social support network are established and maintained, and that shelters are managed in an age-sensitive manner. This includes more proactive measures to ensure in particular that older persons without family or any reference person are protected and their needs are actively evaluated, and also to ensure that older persons are not accommodated with people that may present any sort of risk to them in the shelter context.

95. Furthermore, the Independent Expert emphasizes the importance of improving access to referral pathways and including older persons in all sectoral dimensions of work, in order to prevent, mitigate and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. She stresses the need to raise awareness among humanitarian actors of the protection and socioeconomic risks that older men and women specifically face and to improve accessibility of reporting mechanisms for individuals with hearing, visual or cognitive impairments, and for those who use local or minority languages or are at a heightened risk of neglect, abuse or isolation.

96. Planned relocation requires national legal frameworks to protect the rights of older persons who are affected, and should be accompanied by well-designed institutional arrangements that set forth the respective roles and responsibilities of central and local governments, drawing upon existing standards, guidelines and best practices, such as the Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the Peninsula Principles on Climate Displacement within States and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

97. The Independent Expert also recommends the strengthening of preparedness of older persons at the community level, including awareness of evacuation plans and other emergency plans, and the mapping of the locations of older persons.

98. The Independent Expert calls upon States and humanitarian actors to ensure non-discrimination in livelihood programming, providing choice and options for older persons who wish to work. Such a step includes enabling the participation of older persons in the design of livelihood programming, recognizing their skills, including as trainers and mentors, and adapting programming to improve accessibility for older persons with disabilities.

99. The Independent Expert also highlights the importance of ensuring that the needs of older persons are accurately reflected in health programming in the humanitarian response, such as by improving access to assistive technology and non-communicable disease care and ensuring non-discriminatory access to nutrition programmes, mental health and psychosocial support, and measures to prevent and treat communicable diseases. The Independent Expert stresses the need for regular and repeated mental health screenings, particularly in facilities accommodating displaced older persons, in order to identify and treat common conditions, such as depression and the early stages of dementia. Moreover, it is imperative to reach out to older persons, including through mobile services, to ensure access to more isolated older persons or those with limited mobility. Parcels distributed to older persons during the response phase should be customized to contain items specifically addressing their needs, such as visual and hearing aids, mobility aids, medicine for the treatment of common chronic diseases, adequate food and adult nappies. In addition, such kits may include blankets, thermal patches, cold packs, thermometers, activated charcoal, sterile eyewash, explanations of dosage of medications, and emergency contacts and telephone numbers, including of their closest family members, physicians or pharmacists.

100. The Independent Expert stresses the need to foster partnerships among multisector stakeholders, such as local authorities, public health professionals, architects, housing providers, community organizations, universities, the private sector and older persons themselves. Such partnerships should be developed prior to

emergencies in order to ensure coordination throughout all phases of emergency management. The objective is to engage in data-sharing and service backup, and to establish a detailed map of the given community, identifying points of higher risk, such as the largest concentrations of older persons, which would also serve as a basis for community-wide evacuation and response plans for older persons, particularly those with disabilities. Such evacuation plans should envisage transport, and medications and other essential supplies, as well as separate and specialized shelter areas for older persons with special vulnerabilities (such as those with a disability or affected by non-communicable diseases, chronic conditions or mental health issues).

101. The Independent Expert reiterates her view that the lack of a comprehensive and integrated international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons has significant practical implications, including for older persons in emergency situations. She stresses in particular that current instruments do not make the issues of ageing specific or sufficiently visible, and therefore preclude older persons from the full enjoyment of their human rights, particularly in emergency situations.

Annex

Declaration adopted during the International Expert-Conference on the human rights of older persons, held on 12 and 13 November 2018 in Vienna

- The participants gathered at the International Expert-Conference on the Human Rights of Older Persons from 12 to 13 November 2018 in Vienna, which was organized by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection of Austria with the objective to exchange experiences about the new challenges and opportunities regarding the human rights of older persons, including their right to education and lifelong learning, related to technological developments such as digitalization, robotics, automation and artificial intelligence.
- Welcome the decision of the General Assembly (resolution 65/182 of 21 December 2010) which established the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing and the subsequent decisions of the United Nations legislative and consultative bodies aimed at strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons.
- Take note of the outcomes of the United Nations conferences and summits and of the international conferences held on 11 and 12 April 2016 in Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia, and on 3 and 4 October 2017 in Santiago, they pertain to the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons.
- Acknowledge the work done by the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing on identifying gaps in the protection of the human rights of older persons and ways to address such gaps, and welcome the increasing participation by Member States, civil society, national human rights institutions, United Nations agencies, older persons and experts in the work of the Working Group.
- Further welcome the methodology adopted by the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing in its last two sessions for gathering substantive and normative inputs on selected focus areas in order to contribute to the selection of steps for addressing the identified problems, potentially including recommendations for new standard setting on the protection of the human rights of older persons.
- Support the mandate of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, which was extended by the Human Rights Council in 2016. Take note with appreciation of the reports of the Independent Expert on assessing the state of protection of human rights of older persons across the world, in particular her report on the impact of assistive and robotics technology, artificial intelligence and automation on the human rights of older persons, which identifies remaining challenges and protection gaps and makes recommendations for ensuring that older persons are able to enjoy their human rights on an equal basis with others.
- Are encouraged by the increasing interest of the international community in the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons in the world, and that the international discourse on ageing has widened to further integrate social, development and human rights perspectives.
- Take note of the increasing calls to strengthen the protection of the human rights of older persons without further delay, and recognize that the full enjoyment of their human rights by older persons is a prerequisite for a society for all ages.
- Emphasize that all older persons have the right to enjoy the benefits of developments in technologies, such as digitalization, robotics, automation and artificial intelligence, and the right to education and lifelong learning on an equal basis with others.
- Realize that older persons continue to face challenges in enjoying their human rights in several areas of their lives, including related to the use of technologies, where they may be subject to technological restraints, denied their right to privacy, autonomy and data protection, and experience new forms of isolation and segregation. They also realize that older persons may face ageism and age

discrimination and be denied access to services in the area of education and lifelong learning; and recognize the need to take action to ensure the full enjoyment of their rights and equal opportunities to participate fully in society, develop their full potential and contribute to their communities.

- Bear in mind that technologies have the potential to transform the way support is provided to older people, maintain or strengthen their capabilities, enable them to live autonomous, independent and dignified lives, improve their emotional well-being and increase opportunities for education and lifelong learning and participation in society on an equal basis with others.
- However, they also recognize that older persons are not always able to fully benefit from technologies owing to, inter alia, unavailability, including as a result of inequalities in access between and within countries and different population groups, high costs, restrictive eligibility criteria, lack of integration within existing systems of support, lack of accessibility, inadequate information about services and limited awareness and skills necessary to benefit from technological solutions.
- Believe that the use of technologies, including in the field of education and lifelong learning, must be geared towards enabling older persons to live autonomous and independent lives, fulfil their aspirations, build their skills and capacities, develop their full human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth and participate fully in society, and must not deprive older persons of their liberty, exclude them from decision-making, or stigmatize and objectify them.
- To foster the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons on an equal basis with others, the participants:

Agree to forward the outcomes of this conference to the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing to inform the discussions at its 10th session, which is expected to focus on social protection, education and lifelong learning.

Stress that a human rights-based and participatory approach needs to be embedded in the research, design and implementation of technologies paying due attention to older persons at risk of exclusion or marginalization including those with high support needs, on low incomes and with disabilities, among others.

Further stress that older persons must be involved in the design, provision and monitoring of the use of technologies, including with regard to appropriateness in relation to their needs and preferences, and give their prior and ongoing informed consent for the introduction, use and withdrawal of technologies, including those that prolong life, and be able to opt in or out of their use at any time.

Emphasize that the providers of technologies and related software, including social media companies, must take responsibility for the privacy and protection of data and for the safeguarding of older users against any misuse, abuse or harm, and that older persons must have access to information about, and give their informed consent to, how their personal data will be used.

Emphasize also that measures must be taken to ensure that all older persons have access to, and are involved in the development of appropriate, acceptable and affordable education and lifelong learning opportunities that fit their needs, preferences, skills, motivations, and diverse identities, including but not limited to training in new technologies, so they can develop their full human potential, personality, creativity, talents and sense of dignity and self-worth.

Stress that steps must be taken to eliminate the barriers that older persons face in accessing educational skills and capacity-building goods and services, and informal, recreational and community-based education and lifelong learning programs.

Invite all stakeholders, including, inter alia, Member States, national human rights institutions, United Nations agencies, international organizations, civil society, older persons and experts, to strengthen the dialogue on the protection of the human rights of older persons at regional and national level during the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing intersessional period in order to share experiences, intensify collaboration

and identify substantive and normative elements that need to be better addressed by the international community to allow older persons to fully enjoy their human rights.

Stand together in reaffirming our commitment to ensure the involvement of civil society and in particular of older persons themselves in discussions and decisions about their human rights at all levels.
