



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission for Social Development

#### Fifty-sixth session

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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: strategies for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development for all**

### **Statement submitted by International Federation on Ageing, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## **Statement**

### **Age in the Context of Sustainable Development**

Population ageing has been widely documented as one of the most significant demographic changes of the 21st century, presenting numerous areas of need for adaptation in development. With the population of people over 60 years of age projected to double by 2050, it is imperative for stakeholders to be informed on how to include this diverse and growing group into sustainable development initiatives. The Third Review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing will indicate the areas of great progress as well as those in which older persons could be better addressed globally.

The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) is a global membership network of organizations and individuals that aims to improve the quality of life for older persons through advocacy for policy change. Its knowledge platforms provide opportunities for information exchanges and the creation of innovative partnerships on age-related issues. The International Federation on Ageing, having General Consultative Status at the United Nations, appreciates this opportunity to address the Commission's agenda "Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all".

### **Opportunities for Inclusion**

As an organization whose vision is a world of older persons whose rights and both protected and respected, the IFA supports the objective of leaving no one behind by advocating for policies which take a "life-course approach" and include people of all ages to enable older persons to do what they value. To do so, older persons must be included in the policies, programs, services, and monitoring and evaluation that aim to reduce and eliminate poverty to truly eradicate it. This can be done through participatory and multi-sectorial approaches which intentionally incorporate the needs and interests of all generations in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of these strategies.

The IFA reaffirms the sentiments shared at the Eighth Session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing as well as at the 27th International Day of Older Persons that older persons are agents of change and if engaged, have tremendous potential to contribute to sustainable development around the world. The groups defined as vulnerable groups within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including older persons, are not simply beneficiaries of social development initiatives, but leaders in determining and implementing solutions.

There are numerous ways that social policies can help people thrive at all ages. Growing numbers of cities and communities are adapting to become age-friendly environments that support active participation in societies and economies as people grow older. These environments can also serve to enable healthy lifestyles to help people maintain physical, social, and cognitive health and function throughout life. Furthermore, social protection should be expanded to include comprehensive and affordable universal health care with consideration of specific age-related health concerns. Finally, inequalities among older persons should be examined and addressed to ensure those who are at greater risk of living in poverty are not left behind, including older women, migrants and refugees, indigenous peoples, religious and ethnic minorities, and older persons living in rural areas.

**Recommendations**

To eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development for all, the International Federation in Ageing recommends the following:

1. Protection of older persons from age-discrimination, as well as all other forms of discrimination they may experience, to facilitate their inclusion as contributing members of societies and economies.
2. Expansion of social protection so that health care is affordable, comprehensive, and universal.
3. Collaboration between governments, civil society, industry, and international organizations to ensure policies are informed by the diverse needs and interests of older persons.

**Conclusion**

This 56th Session of the Commission for Social Development, the second focusing on poverty eradication to achieve Sustainable Development for all, allows for expansion on the ideas about who can be the actors of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Connecting field experts, governments, civil society, private sector, and older persons themselves to work in partnership to promote healthy ageing across the lifespan can create societies where people of all ages are empowered to prosper.

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