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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by AARP, Alzheimer’s Disease International — International Federation of Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders Societies, Global Action on Aging, Gray Panthers, HelpAge International, Instituto Qualivida, International Council on Social Welfare, International Federation on Ageing, International Longevity Center Global Alliance and International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, non-governmental organizations 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.



Statement

Introduction: women in an ageing world

By 2050, there will be 2 billion older people globally, the majority of whom will be women. Current figures from “World population prospects: the 2012 revision” of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat show that there are 84 men for every 100 women over the age of 60. The proportion of women rises further with age. For every 100 women aged 80 or over worldwide, there are only 61 men, and most older people will be living in developing countries. This population ageing is happening most rapidly in developing countries. Today almost two thirds of all older people live in developing countries and this will rise to four fifths by 2050.

Ageing, women and the Millennium Development Goals

The failure to take global ageing into account in the Millennium Development Goals has limited their ability to ensure that girls and women of all ages benefit from initiatives aimed at reaching both the goals on gender equality and the other areas of development.

A lifetime of gender-based inequalities often results in older women experiencing financial and physical abuse and discrimination. This gender-based discrimination is often exacerbated when it intersects with discrimination on the basis of age, which is widespread in all regions of the world. This form of multiple discrimination, namely that based on sex and age, and the inequalities it results in, has not been recognized in assessments of progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

This is nowhere more apparent than in the area of violence against women. The elimination of violence against girls and women of all ages is a key component for achieving all of the Millennium Development Goals. Failure to prevent violence against women presents a major obstacle to girls’ and women’s development at every stage of their lives, as well as the development of society more broadly.

Preventing violence against women as a central element to the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals has been recognized by both the Secretary-General (see [A/67/257](#)) and the Commission on the Status of Women (see [E/2013/27-E/CN.6/2013/11](#)). The Commission on the Status of Women also recognized the particular risk of violence older women face and stressed the urgent need to address violence and discrimination against them, especially in the light of the growing proportion of older people in the world’s population in the agreed conclusions of the report on its fifty-seventh session (*ibid.*).

Time for a data revolution

However, the absence of a requirement to collect and disaggregate data across all age groups in the Millennium Development Goals has posed a major challenge for data collection and utilization at the country level, with indicators and interventions focusing on younger age groups and excluding older women.

Surveys on violence against women rarely collect data after the age of 49. This critical information gap has significant implications. It makes it impossible for States to monitor progress on their human rights obligations in respect of freedom

from violence. It conceals patterns of violence against older women and results in their subsequent exclusion from prevention and rehabilitation policies and programmes.

It is essential that these obstacles and challenges be recognized and taken into account not only in the final stages of implementation of the current Millennium Development Goals but also in the planning of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda to ensure that it actively promotes women's rights and gender equality for girls and women of all ages.

Looking ahead: the post-2015 sustainable development framework

The post-2015 sustainable development framework must be human-rights based for all people of all ages and abilities. All goals and their targets must take account of the rights of people at all stages of their lives and the specific abuse and discrimination faced by older women must be recognized and stopped.

The post-2015 framework should have a gender equality goal with indicators and targets that are inclusive of all people of all ages and abilities.

The "data revolution" called for by the High-level Panel of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda must give priority to improved data collection and reporting which ensures that all data, including that on violence against women and girls, be collected, disaggregated, analysed and disseminated by sex and for all ages up to and over 100. Goals and targets adopted by Member States must be measurable, require the collection of specific data on older age groups and be monitored through robust accountability mechanisms.

This will ensure that the post-2015 sustainable development framework is fit for purpose in today's ageing world, enabling Governments, donors, United Nations agencies, civil society, communities and older women themselves to address the challenges of global ageing, including that of violence against girls and women of all ages.
