

**Closing statement  
by**

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**at**

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Excellencies, distinguished delegates, colleagues and friends,

**(The Declaration)**

I am greatly honoured to address the Conference at this moment and I wish to congratulate all of you on the adoption of the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration “A Sustainable Society for All: Realizing the potential of living longer”.

The consensus shown through this Declaration is a strong foundation to recognize and better harness the potential that longer lives offer to individuals and societies.

It guides us towards a sustainable society for all ages. It empowers old and young to participate *in* and contribute *to* society, according to their capacities, needs, and desires, through their lives. The Declaration affirms the need to safeguard human rights, it reinforces essential commitments, and it refines our focus.

**(Longer-term view)**

Today, ageing as a topic is high on the agenda across the world. We see it in government actions, widening media coverage, vocal civil society and us as individuals.

Our populations are getting older, and this will not change over many decades to come. A huge leap in the technology shapes our working and living environment. We have to take this into account if we wish to sustain the social fabric of our societies.

In adopting this Declaration, you, the member States, have given due attention not only to the challenges but also to the potential that gains in longevity imply.

At this Conference, I have seen that the topic is in the hands of responsible leaders. I trust you will set the course and make a difference for the lives of your countries’ citizens.

I wish you continued commitment and success in enacting policies that are sustainable and equitable for all.

**(Importance of international cooperation & follow-up)**

A good number of you in the room have been working on shaping the international policy framework on ageing over the last few decades, dedicating to it many years of your own lives.

You also stood for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development that is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. The 2030 Agenda aims to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity, equality and in a healthy environment. That they can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives.

The Lisbon Declaration that you have adopted today echoes these principles in the goals and commitments to:

- Recognize the potential of older persons
- Encourage longer working lives and ability to work
- Ensure ageing with dignity

These goals will guide your actions when you return home and look for ways to address challenges and make the best of the potential of people of different ages.

Older persons have a lifetime of experience and there is a lot we can learn from them. The NGO forum was a powerful illustration of the energies of older persons. This is also the case of the debates at the Open-ended Working Group in New York, which works towards strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons.

I saw that ageing solicits a lot of scientific interest in many fields. I am convinced that when the dialogue between policymakers and scientists is managed well, there is considerable room for robust, evidence-based policies and actions.

I was also pleased to see the many young faces in the room throughout the Conference. We have lived up to our own call for interaction between all generations. I am confident that the networks that were formed and strengthened will carry forward the implementation of our Declaration.

**(UNECE's role)**

I would like to reassure you that the UNECE secretariat remains committed to assist you in your follow-up actions. I am glad that the Declaration reaffirms your commitment to the UNECE Working Group on Ageing and the appreciation of the work of the secretariat. Thank you.

Many of the activities that we have organized in the past and plan in the future, rely on additional financial contributions from member States. The contributions from a number of countries have greatly strengthened and broadened the range of activities that the Working Group can pursue. I am very happy that you have reaffirmed in the Declaration the continuation of such support to the extent possible.

We will surely continue to support the international exchanges of policymakers, and maintain links to non-governmental organizations, researchers and statisticians. We are also committed to continuing capacity-building for designing and developing ageing-related policies and programmes.

**(Thanks)**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we are nearing the end of the Conference, allow me to express my gratitude to all the government delegations, to the representatives of the civil society and the scientific community for their contributions.

I am deeply grateful to the Portuguese Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security for hosting and organizing the Conference together with us. I would also like to thank the City of Lisbon, the local organizers, interpreters, as well as my colleagues from the UNECE secretariat.

I hope that the spirit of partnership and commitment at the Lisbon Ministerial Conference will remain with us.

Thank you.