Statement by
H.E. Ambassador Muhammad Anshor
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations
at
the Sixth Session of the Open Ended Working Group on Ageing
New York, 14 July 2015

Mr. Chairman,
Allow me to begin by congratulating you and members of the Bureau upon your election. I am confident that under your able leadership, the sixth session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing will be able to accomplish the tasks set out before it.

Mr. Chairman,
As the UN demographic statistics predict, by mid 21st century the elderly will outnumber the youth. On the one hand, our societies are sure to benefit from the elderly population’s knowledge, experience and wisdom. On the other hand, the loss of economic independence as well as the rising health problems related to ageing pose challenges that not every country is equipped to handle adequately.

Developing countries are especially disavantaged, since they are facing growing needs of the ageing population at much lower levels of economic development.

In light of those concerns, the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing plays a role in promoting dialogue, particularly on the inter-connections between economic dimensions and ageing.

Taking note of the close connection between social and economic development with demographics, and its impact on the natural relationship between youth and older persons, it would be constructive for the Working Group to give attention to intergenerational dialogue, which could better serve the need to develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to the shifting population structure.
Mr. Chairman,

As with other countries around the world, Indonesia’s population is experiencing a gradual shift in its age structure as a result of declining growth rate, better health care, as well as longer life expectancy. It is projected that the number of older persons will double within the next two decades, making up 16 percent of the total population in 2035.

As a nation with strong family bonds, the elderly are an indispensable member of the family unit and society. We value their enormous potential, and we intend to continue making full use of their talents, knowledge and wisdom in our national development process.

However, the traditional social norms on ageing are increasingly challenged by urbanizing trends and population mobility. The rapid shift in the social architecture is challenging to keep pace with, which has resulted in policy gaps for the older age population.

Nevertheless, Indonesia is committed to ensure a good quality of life for older persons by ensuring an enabling supportive environment, enhancing health and wellbeing, as well as ensuring active participation and involvement of older persons in development.

To fulfill its commitments in promoting the dignity and wellbeing of older persons, the Government of Indonesia since 1998 has designed and implemented several innovative policies through legislations. A National Commission for Older Persons was also established to focus on ageing.

In the early period since the government began its policies on ageing, attention was placed on the promotion and protection of the elderly’s rights through their protection against exploitation, violence and abuse, discrimination as well as ensuring the promotion of their social, economic and political rights.

We expanded our priorities towards older persons among others by improving health care and services, as well as creating a supportive policy environment. To this end, Indonesia has consistently been implementing its National Plan of Action for Older Persons. Began by Guidelines in 2003, continued to the First National Plan of Action on Ageing 2004-2009, and Second National Plan of Action 2014-2019.

Many plans have been realized, yet we know there is more to be done. The government has been constantly reviewing the implementation of various projects and initiatives to improve the quality of life and protect the dignity of older persons.

Mr. Chairman,

To conclude, I wish to end our statement by reiterating the importance of this Open Ended Working Group to further identify the implementation gaps of the existing Human Rights instruments relevant to the protection of rights and dignity of older persons. It is our understanding that all core human rights instruments are applicable to older persons. We are, however, open to the idea of developing additional normative framework and common standards to address their specific needs and vulnerabilities associated with ageing. We are of the view that this Working Group should make effective use of the extensive works of relevant UN entities and treaty bodies in elaborating elements for such framework.

I thank you.