VI Working Session of the
Open-ended Working Group on Ageing

Statement by
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United Nations Headquarters
Mr. President,

The Dominican Republic would like to congratulate you for the excellent work you have done as president and for organizing this Sixth Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, and we would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We are very confident that, under your guidance, the results of this working group will be profitable and successful.

Mr. President,

The Dominican Republic welcomes the adoption of the Inter-American Convention on the Human Rights of Older Persons in the plenary of the Organization of American States (OAS), and we believe this is the right time to start the process of negotiating a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention. The Dominican Republic supports the actions of the Group of Friends of Older Persons and the efforts being made towards the goal of communicating the group's objective.

Mr. President,

While it is true that there are international instruments that protect the fundamental rights of all human beings, it also true that there are specific rights of older persons which are constantly being violated.

The right to comprehensive health care, the right of access to credit and to microenterprise, the right to maintain their autonomy, even when residing in a permanent facility, the right to give their consent on matters concerning their health, among others, are some of the freedoms our elders are not enjoying.

Because of this, it is urgent for the older persons of the world have to a legally binding international instrument which offers a real guarantee that all of their rights will be safeguarded, and that they may live with dignity on the path they must travel.
Mr. President,

We firmly believe it is time to make concrete decisions about what steps we will take in the future, because so many millions of older people in the world continue to suffer multiple setbacks at a stage in life when they should be reaping the fruits they have sown. Today, at a time when they need our support the most, the society they once built is turning its back on them.

Mr. President,

Evidence of the Dominican Republic's commitment to meeting this great challenge was demonstrated by President Danilo Medina in his speech on accountability, where he expressed the priority the Dominican government places on older persons, and how important it is for older persons to lead an active, inclusive and protected life, where not only the State, but also the family and society as a whole take action to make this a reality.

In this regard, new programs and projects were established to expand the care and protection of our elders. First, the nursing homes, day care centers and health programs for the elderly directed by the National Council for the Elderly (CONAPE) were centralized.

A network of caregivers was made available free of charge to provide care for the elderly in their homes, and agencies were created to accommodate older persons who are in extreme poverty.

Furthermore, given the observed increase in cases of violence against the elderly in 2015, the Special Prosecutor's Office on Violence Against Older Persons was implemented to respond in a timely manner to these kinds of cases.

Mr. President,

CONAPE created the National System for the Comprehensive Protection and Care of Older Persons. This system has two (2) areas of focus to ensure permanent and comprehensive inclusion in all services and forms of care, covering the different components needed to guarantee a better quality of life for the elderly.
The first area is comprised of Comprehensive Centers of Knowledge. These centers create comprehensive programs for development that enable seniors to participate in society in a dignified, active and productive way.

The second area includes the AMESE program. This program is aimed at older persons who need focused care in the special situations they are living in, whose condition does not allow them to access the Comprehensive Centers of Knowledge.

One of the most recent and innovative programs are the Correction and Rehabilitation Centers for Older Persons (CCR-AM). This program is designed to humanize prisons by applying a progressive treatment system for older persons who are deprived of their freedom, culminating in post-penitentiary care for released prisoners to promote their adaptation to society and to prevent repeat offenses, thus contributing to the reduction of crime and violence and promoting a safer society.

Despite these advances we have mentioned, older persons in the Dominican Republic are facing major challenges regarding social security and pensions that limit opportunities to have an adequate standard of living and human development.

Mr. President,

The issue of older persons needs to have a greater international reach in order to have an influence on the strengthening of national public policies. That is why we insist on the importance of including the issue of older persons horizontally, and with indicators in the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

Thank you very much.