Canada’s Closing Statement to Open-ended Working Group on Ageing – July 2015

• Merci Monsieur le President.

• I would like to start by thanking the Chair, the bureau, the Secretariat, as well as the panelists for a fruitful session with interesting exchanges of views and contributions to the discussions during this sixth session of the Working Group. Let me also take this opportunity to thank civil society representatives for their thoughtful dialogue and suggestions.

• Canada is confident that all various viewpoints and best practices discussed over the course of the last few days are a positive step towards enhancing the implementation of the human rights of older persons. The rich discussion on how to best assist our older populations at the local, national, and international levels continues to indicate that there is a need for improvement in promoting and protecting the rights of our older populations.

• The session has shown that we continue to debate the best way forward for the world’s ageing demographic. Mr. Chair, I must reiterate that Canada and other Member States continue to express the need to better utilize the existing international human rights framework to advance the rights of older persons.

• Our implementation efforts must match our ambitions for the well-being of older persons. As discussed earlier in the session, we have a unique opportunity to promote and protect the human rights of older persons through the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), to integrate the human rights and diverse needs of older persons into national, as well as international, economic and social development policies. Let me further indicate the importance of the MIPAA in recognizing older people as contributors to the development of their societies. We have a significant opportunity to utilize this mechanism in a more encompassing way with the upcoming 3rd Review and Appraisal process of the MIPAA.
• The MIPAA is but one of the many existing mechanisms in place that we can all use to improve the situation of older persons worldwide.

• We also have a unique opportunity before us to intensify and increase attention to the human rights of older persons through the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda which will set out common global development goals for the next 15 years. The Post-2015 Agenda also provides us with an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to addressing the unmet elements of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as to the ageing and demographic pressures that many countries will face.

• As we all know, we must raise awareness, ensure that the human rights of older persons are reflected in future public policies and programs, and engage all stakeholders including citizens, governments, civil society organizations, philanthropic organizations, academia and the private sector on the human rights of older persons.

• To that end, Member States can rely on the wide array of existing standards, policy frameworks and other tools in the UN system including: treaties and General Assembly resolutions, as well as special mechanisms such as the independent expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons.

• Mr. Chair, in Canada’s view, this Working Group has achieved many great things including putting the rights of older persons on the international agenda and it has brought member States together to search for solutions. Canada believes it is important for all countries to express their views and we thank those countries that have put options forward, including the option of a new convention. Discussing this possibility was helpful in taking a broader look at the current legal framework, to consider what is practical and possible today within the UN human rights system and to assess how to best address the serious implementation challenges before us.
Canada maintains its position that a new convention would provide little by way of new protections, would add to an overloaded human rights reporting and monitoring system, and would not bring about timely and concrete change. Therefore, Canada believes that we must opt for concrete action through access to knowledge, education and training, income security and social protection, provisions for active ageing and ageing in place, so that older persons can continue to participate fully within in society and see human rights realized.

In closing, Mr. Chair, Canada is pleased to be a part of this Working Group, as it continues to deliver an excellent platform for keeping the human rights of older persons on the international agenda and for sharing ideas, solutions and best practices. I would like to extend Canada’s thanks to all participants including you, Mr. Chair, the bureau, the secretariat, participating member States and all NGOs and observers attending.

Merci monsieur le président, et je vous remercie pour votre attention.